

Will to forgive

James Record

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David was a strange man, different in many ways, he never really fitted in, he wasn't physically different, and he looked the same and wasn't disabled. No he just thought about things differently, he wasn't dumb or super smart either just had a different outlook on life.

He always had to do things his way, no one else's, always his way, he lived a life of sin, selfish even, he didn't care about anyone, well maybe a few people he called friends but he was mostly a one-man ban. It was up to him to do things and never relied on anyone else.

If someone had a problem with David, he wouldn't get his harder mates to get the other guy, no he'd always do it himself, even if he knew he couldn't win. Well, he didn't really see it like that; he saw it as; well what I have to lose, and just goes for it. In fact it's a surprise he hasn't been killed yet, he's always in fights, and isn't afraid to fight dirty and doesn't go easy on the blades either, he's already killed two men and wounded about five other, and they're just the official statistics.

Oh it goes right back, right back to when was at university, some say his whole life, some say school but no it was university.

Yes, he's always in trouble with the police, he doesn't care, he doesn't know how some say, some say he's just evil, while some still see that there is a person there buried under years of neglect, abuse and decay.

It was time for David to work, another day another unpredictable mess, no one knew what would happen each day only for at least one person at the hand of David, they wouldn't be too happy at the end. That's not to say he's always violent but you don't want to be on the wrong end of him when he's mad.

He gets up like a normal man and gets ready like a normal man; he's a bit obsessive in his routine but nothing to be called a compulsive. He's more or less a normal man, well when he's on his own, but put in a room with others and, yes you've guessed it, they get it.

So his fellow employees are safe for now but when he's finished getting ready he leaves the house, like a normal man, gets in his car and drives to work.

It's not long on his way he finds his first victim, of course he doesn't attack them all violently but the finger can have the same effect, especially when the man in question is twice his size.

He was driving along nicely when he hits your typical early morning hold-ups, to him he doesn't care if they're burying new cables or people, he drives and gets stuck, so instead of waiting the thirty seconds it would take to clear the road he revs his engine and blasts his horn.

When a man trying to weave past him suggests calming down, it then that David raises his hand at the man and smashes his head into the steering wheel.

The man in the other car just ignores him and a good job too; he was huge.

After another two or three temper tantrums and the attitude of a two year old he made it to work where he parked up as usual and walked through the main door.

The woman on the desk raised her hand and said "Hi". To which he replied, "Shut the hell up, you dumb..." and would've continued if the boss hadn't walked in then.

He groaned and ignored the receptionists walking up to the stairs where his office was.

The stairs weren't a problem for him, he just liked to complain, so when he got to the elevator and saw the out-of-order sign he picked his briefcase up and smashed it into the door.

He then walked up the stairs muttering once again and started thinking, thinking about back when he was younger and things were ok, but he quickly ran out of steps to climb and entered his office in a stress.

He shared his office with three other people, another man and two women, so when he walked in and saw the watch he didn't need to consult his conscience for advice. Having pocketed the valuable or not watch he sat at his desk. The notice on his computer screen didn't impress him much; though compared to some days, this was a good one.

When the man he worked with entered the room he sighed and walked out again, the three of them, in fact the whole business had got used to him and just ignored him. He ripped the message off the screen leaving bits where the corners were and screwed it up throwing it in the bin, at first you'd think it was one of workmates winding him up but it wasn't the boss had told him to hurry up with his work.

So, he picked up his phone and dialled the three-digit code for his boss's office and when it answered, he let rip.

Amongst the shouting and screaming at David you could hear a much calmer voice, telling him to come to his office.

He ran out his office and legged it up the stairs to the next floor, with each of his leaps making sounds louder than standing behind a jet.

Once on the next floor he went to the office in the corner without knocking opened the door and shouted, "What?"

"David, take a seat."

"No I'll stand."

"David, we've received many complaint about your work progress and your behaviour and attitude to the other staff, now we know why you're here but despite that I think it would be better for you and the other staff that you..."

"What? You...you can't, you son of a..."

"David, collect your things and leave the premises within the hours please, and don't touch my staff!"

David turned around and started walking out of the door and then stormed down the stairs and ran into his office where a man and women who shared his office were sat. They both picked up a newspaper next to them and pretended to be reading it as David snatched his things and smashed the door as he left, only to here a quiet snigger behind it.

He was definitely not in the mood for fun and games now and any slightest patronising comment by the deliverymen would stir a bit of trouble.

There wasn't a deliveryman but there was someone David knew only too well, and as they walked past each other the other man said, "Hey Dave, off in a strop again?"

Again, he wasn't in the mood for fun and games and didn't take kindly to the apology that followed.

"You stupid dick! Who the hell do you think your talking to?"

"Sorry mate."

"Sorry? Sorry?"

David moved over to the other man and grabbed his collar and tie pushing him up against a wall. "Do you think I wouldn't kill you? Do you think I care anymore?"

Those days are over. I've already ruined it so why wouldn't I kill again?"

"I...said...sor...ry."

David released his grasp and pushed the man to the floor walking away.

The man then wasn't smart enough to know how far David's patients would go and bent over and picked up a small stone and through it in David's direction.

The stone missed and bounced up off a car next to David, who then turned around and went for him, the man realised that was a dumb thing to do and legged it, problem was David was faster.

He caught him and spun him around and without a word punched him in the face, just as the swaying man was about to fall David grabbed his head and ran it into the wall to the side of him. By now three or four people were watching, that didn't bother him, never has.

He dropped the man and walked calmly like he'd done nothing wrong back the way he came and got in his car driving off leaving the other man out.

The man known only to most as the Star was reading again, he was reading the bible and was thinking of why some men are good and some men are bad.

Every night since he was small he would try and read the bible but he found a lack of interest and usually fell asleep before he even read the first sentence.

The Star considered himself a good man and wanted to keep it that way, if others talked of him he would pass it by like it never happened.

He considered himself a Christian; only he'd never read the bible, didn't attend church and never understood all the beliefs, he just decided he was. He always said he like to find the Lord in his own way and didn't like being told what to do, he didn't see how that was belief.

He was called the Star back from at school, he had a real name only no one knew it or used it.

Instead of biting when people annoyed him he simple ignored them or came up with a witty comeback without swearing or having to be violent, he hated violence, but he knew if he had to fight then he wouldn't be afraid to fight. Luck for him he hadn't had to.

The Star at the moment is at school and isn't always the popular kid there, maybe because he lets it all pass him, there nothing wrong him physically just he doesn't join in with the typical teenage definition of fun.

He hates watching fights and doesn't understand what interest others have in watching two boys, or girls, beat the crap out of each other, or to the point in getting drunk for the point of feeling out of control and throwing up all the way home.

It was time for the Star to go to school; he was in his final year of sixth form and waiting to get into university where he was hoping to study English literature, lit had always fascinated him he wrote many books about anything related to him and read hundreds of books. There probably wasn't a single book he couldn't quote from, except the bible, the only book he'd never read from cover to cover.

He got his bag with a lorry load of books and had to drag it down the stairs into the hall where he raised it and swung it onto his back and walked through the door, he didn't eat breakfast, he like the school's breakfast menu too much.

He walked down the street with his back bowed from the weight of the bag, he didn't need half the book he just liked reading, leaving little room for the books he did need. He didn't live too far from the school so he was there is five minutes and like usual avoided contact with the younger kids and some of the older ones too.

He headed for the entrance to the sixth form part and dropped his bag with a hole through the floor, "Hey Star! Heard yer mum's so fat she makes the Vicar of Dibley look anorexic."

Like always, he ignored him and carried on, he lifted his bag onto a table and sat down.

She was a woman who liked things right. She hated things unfair, the type who wants world peace, end of poverty, no discrimination and a stop to cruelty to animals. She was a person who read the bible back to front and upside down, she knew everything you should do and if it meant stopping what she was doing to help someone she would.

She helped many people who thought they had lost it recover; she worked as a community worker and helped out with a wide range of things. The one she would do today would be to help out at the rehabilitation centre and helped alcoholics and drug addicts become like normal people again.

As she got ready she put her favourite shirt on with a jacket she'd worn many times but was still in almost perfect condition.

She walked to the door and turned a small lamp off on a table in the hall and slid a book she'd been reading into the draw under the table.

She walked through the door locking it behind her, putting the key in her handbag and walking towards her car.

She enjoyed having the environment as it was so owned the most ecologically friendly car she could afford, it was red and had the power of a small lawnmower, but she only used it now and again so she wasn't too fussed.

As she drove down the road she saw something small and to anyone insignificant, but to her it was most important. As she got closer she swerved and almost got herself killed in the process, all to avoid a hedgehog.

Closer to the AA meeting she decided to think about how many people might turn up and how long she wanted to stay, she didn't mind staying up all night helping others in greater need just she still needs sleep herself.

She pulled into the car park and got out walking into the building.

After having just beat a man for no particular reason, David headed home and wasn't expecting the police to be there when he got home.

As he turned into his street, he saw them waiting in front of his house in a van and a car, he stopped his car early and put it into reverse as one the police pointed at him shortly followed by the rest of them running towards him.

David snatched the clutch and spun the car around to the left, put it in first and gunned it down the street, as he looked in his rear-view mirror he saw police running back towards the van as he tore away.

As soon as he was out of the street and back onto the road he turned off the police van was already behind him again with lights but not sirens, he thought for about two seconds and accelerated forward down the road.

Two seconds was about the closest David came to considering ethics, instead to drove as fast as his slow car would go and got up to speed, unfortunately the police car behind the car would go faster.

He didn't really care if he knew he wasn't going to get away, he just wanted to be free for as long as possible, he raced down a road which was only thirty, the police knew

they would catch him within a couple of minutes but wanted to warn the public and turned their sirens on also doing almost twice the speed limit.

It wasn't long flying down the busy street at such a speed that he'd would hit something, a car was parked a bit wide of the curb and David hit the back bumper sending his car outwards into oncoming traffic.

He hit a car head on and stopped moving, the other car wasn't too bad but David's car was crumpled at the front, he tried to bail out but had hurt his leg in the collision, so was able limp. When the police car arrived, three men got out, one went to the other car while the other two chased David and drove him into the ground and cuffed him without too much trouble.

The two policemen grabbed him by the handcuffs and lifted him up now weak and could barely stand on his feet and dragged him over to the police van which had arrived after he crashed and threw him in the back locking the door.

The van started moving forward and David, alone in the back started to think, he knew he'd done wrong but couldn't face up to admit it. Instead he just sat there thinking to himself about when he was younger and for a moment came the closest for about ten years to crying.

He felt a feeling he definitely hadn't felt in a long time, but was it remorse or sorrow? No just his same old selfish feeling sorry for himself.

While he was in the van he actually thought about what he'd done, but not once did he consider what was about to happen.

While being drove away he didn't shout or struggle like most people who are arrested, he just sat there and talked quietly to himself, as the van started to slow he sighed and sat back up strait as he knew his few minutes of peace were about to be interrupted followed by a lot more minutes of peace.

As the van stopped two policemen from the front opened the doors at the back and pulled David out into concrete yard, he didn't fight or try to escape, just stood there. "Right David, We're going to take to now into the police station and see what the book has to say."

They lead him across the yard and through two doors into and station, they then took him down and up to a front desk.

"Oh...Not you again."

David had been arrested many times, so he knew the procedures, "Right, how long this time?"

"Uh...oh just until we decide how long. Take him into the cell please."

The man on the desk then turned to the other policeman, "Why are we still letting him do this? This must be the third time."

"Forth...actually."

The two men lead him down a corridor, checked his pockets for weapons and drugs, found non and showed him into an empty cell.

Having just dropped his bags off in the sixth form area, the Star then walked back out of the door and headed to the cafeteria for breakfast, he usually had something normal but not always.

He walked through the doors and across the concrete maze of broken and not level slabs with rusty metal but painted yellow poles on what would appear to be steps.

Not noticing that every slab had about ten pieces of chewed chewing gum as he walked through the wooden doors hanging on by a small hinge, as it was morning he didn't have to queue for as long as he would if were lunch.

Went to the front and bought what normally you would buy for lunch, for breakfast.

“Are you sure you want that lot this early?”

“No...it's for lunch, I had breakfast at home today.”

It's not often this Boy would lie, only when he felt it was irrelevant to anything, then he didn't see any harm.

He took his packet of crisps and chocolate bar outside after paying for them and walked over to a bench sitting down and opening the crisps.

After eating the cheese and onions he walked back over to sixth form area and found his bag on the floor in the corner.

He picked his bag up and found was inside out, skinning, as they called it, he took his books out turned it back the right way round and put his books back in, not really thinking much of they pathetic idiots who did it.

It was five minutes before lesson and there was still only him in the room, but shortly followed by three more, each taking a seat on the small plastic chairs he'd thought he'd left behind.

Within the next five minutes a few at a time the rest of the class including the teacher walked into the room and sat down on their preferred seat.

During the course of that day the Star received his usual fair share of ripping, he didn't mind it, as long they weren't serious and actually doing anything, then just a few lame insults and banter was fine by him. He just felt it was all part of growing up, you win some you lose some; only for him it was you lose some you lose some more. He didn't bite, in fact he often laughed at the joke that was laughing at him not with him, but he felt if he could take it easy then there wouldn't have to be any stress. Every night when he got home the first thing he would do would to start homework, even if he didn't have any, he didn't like it, he wasn't a sad person who enjoyed doing extra work. He just felt if he got it out the way then there would be more time for other things, he really liked playing games consoles, he would like to be outside with others but he found that by the first year of secondary school that wasn't such a good idea.

He didn't mind not going out, he just liked being on his own, this didn't bother him, he didn't prefer it but is was probably better in the long run, well to him it was.

After he finished the last of his work he had nothing better to do, so watched the small portable television in the corner of his almost perfectly tidy room.

He was at the best bit of a film he'd seen before when there came knocking at the front door, he left the room with the DVD on pause and walked over the landing and listened to his parents talking the people outside.

He didn't hear it all but what he did hear would make most people enraged and likely a threat to public, but he didn't mind, it was all part of growing up.

“Is the Star *ahem* here?” The boy, he knew who it was, was asking for him, he didn't need to see him to know he had a big patronising cheesy smile on his face.

“Who?”

“The Star...you know stupid retard gay boy.”

“Can you go home, I know what you lot are like.”

The boys, there were three of them walked off his driveway and pulled a cardboard carton from behind his back and open the lid, picked up the rounded shell and threw it at one of the downstairs windows.

The Stars Dad was the first to go, as the boy reached for another he ran out of the door only wearing socks and chased them half way down the street until he gave up, turning around he walked back to his house and found the Star at the door.

“You know these?”

“Yeah, they’re just idiots who go to my school, a few years below.”

“Well! Why did they do that?”

“I don’t know, can’t you just leave it?”

“No! I sodding can’t! Are these what you call friends?”

“No...I’m going back upstairs.”

“Oh...great, stupid kids.”

The Star walked slowly dragging his weight back up the stairs and into his room sitting back down on the bed and flopped face down into the bedding.

The women called Laura, had just had another successful night, she had managed to convince another three out of the eight people to cut back on alcohol and persuaded another two to consider it.

She had another week full of AA meetings and social work planned and was looking forward to going to the local prison in a few weeks and meeting some of the prisoners willing to let her try and rehabilitate them. She also felt rehab in any form was better than locking up people either in jail or a life of slow death from drugs, because it gave them a chance to live again.

This prison meeting would last for two days and she had been looking forward to it for nearly a year, she felt it would be way to push her career forward, and if she was really lucky or good she would even get to continue next year as well.

As she left the meeting she got in her car and started to drive home, it was now dark and she had to drive the longer way through the country because the main street had been blocked off due to road works, driving a road she hadn’t drove down much, well not at night, she wouldn’t have seen it before she hit it. Slamming on her brakes and getting out the car, she found a small deer on the road, it wasn’t dead just had two of it’s legs broken and bruising to it’s body. She picked it up and put it in the back seat of her car, normally someone would break it’s neck and leave it, but she was different, she felt if she got it somewhere quick enough she could save it.

When she got home she found it had already died and felt like it was a person she’d known, she picked the deer up like it was a child and put it in her garage and covered it in plastic sheets. She went inside and would deal with the deer in the morning, but for now she would sleep.

The Star had fallen asleep in the face down position still clothed, when he woke up at eleven at night, he quickly brushed his teeth and got into bed and quickly fell back to sleep.

He dreamt often of life, as he wanted it, not necessarily perfect all round, but for him at least, the way he imagined heaven to be.

When he awoke the next morning he found it was late but not too late to get ready, rushing round he got ready and then remembered why his alarm never went off. Sometimes he did these things, forgot whether he's coming or going, sometimes even his own name, he figured it must be the confusion, the many things running through his mind that didn't make it to become actual events.

He went back to bed, it was Saturday and didn't sleep, but he did lie there and think, think about what ifs and how he could be a better person.

He felt safe alone and trusted himself, just about the only one he trusted when it came to these private matters.

He never shared these with anyone he just thought about them and pretended they never existed.

He assumed today, being a day of peace and a day of himself it would be a good day, a day where he could hear himself think and didn't need to be with anyone.

Well, he would be wrong, he hadn't realised today he would be going into town to buy something for Mothers' day on the Sunday, he hated this because it meant going into town.

He liked buying things for people, he just hated town and it wasn't just the people, it was the confusion of not knowing where to go and then spending all morning dragging bags of unnecessary items around.

David sat there in his cell feeling sorry for himself, which was rare because usually he shows no emotion; even anger seems calm and controlled.

He hadn't slept in the night, he slept on the floor not the small bed supplied.

As he felt like dropping off, a policeman came up to the cell and banged on the door, "Wakey wakey!"

"What... Oh crap it's morning."

He stood up and dusted the inch thick layer of dust from the floor off his clothes, the man opened the door and instructed David to walk down the corridor to the front desk handcuffing him as he walked.

"Right David, I'm afraid to say, this time you're not getting off so easy. You have a court case against you next week, usually these things take longer but luckily for you we've already gathered most the evidence so you'll be in here until then."

He looked like he was about to try a quick one but then stood still again, "Oh great!" The policeman escorted him back to his cell and locked the door again.

Sitting back on the bed made for one of seven dwarfs he sighed and collapsed his face into his hands but then sat up strait again, and lay down sideways and fell asleep.

He had been asleep for about ten minutes dreaming of when he was younger and would have continued too if he hadn't been awoke again.

"Breakfast"

"What's this crap?"

"This crap...this crap is better than you'll be getting next week so enjoy it while you have it."

David was too tired to know what he was talking about so sat up and ate the food; he ate three mouthfuls but then decided he wasn't hungry. He put the plastic tray down on the concrete floor and went back to sleep.

As the Star left for town sighing, he grabbed the handful of notes and arranged them into value and put them in his pocket walking down the stairs. At the bottom he turned, put his shoes on and walked out the door in just a t-shirt, it was cold but he didn't feel it.

Walking down the street he saw some boys younger than him but old enough sitting on bikes and on someone's front wall, he walked down a alley between two houses before they saw him and walked down there until joining the street he wanted to be on anyway.

Now on the main street he could walk strait down into town and buy something for Mothers' day, but while he was there he thought he may as well buy some other things, he had enough money.

He saved regularly and never spent, he didn't see the point, possessions only collect dust and break, why not save and spent it something useful.

When he got closer to town he saw some of the guys from his class, they were smoking on the small park, and he wasn't convinced it was tobacco either.

Walking past them, not even looking but the back of his head became accustomed to them and saw him anyway.

"Hey! Dick! What yer doin'? Don't usually see you round here."

Not answering, not even looking he walked on down the street to the shop where he needed to go first.

Walking into the shop and walked over the counter and picked out a bunch of flowers for his mum and paid the fiver.

"Erm...is there any way of hiding these? I don't want to look like a prick walking down the..."

"Sure yeah! Put them in this bag and they'll never notice a thing."

After buying the flowers and hiding them in a carrier bag he continued to the next shop he'd planned on buying from.

That meant going back the other way, he walked back and as he walked passed the boys he knew they crossed the road in front of a car showing off.

"What yer got in the bag Star?"

"Nothing"

"Nothing doesn't come in bags. What you got in the bag?"

He carried on trying to walk down the road but one of them grabbed him and pressed him up against a wall.

"I asked you a question, don't you walk away from me."

He pushed the boy off and walked down the street, the boys started laughing, "Only joking mate, don't have to take it too serious."

Forgetting the game he'd planned on buying he took the flowers and walked home, he didn't mind it was all part of growing up he kept telling himself.

When the Star got home his Dad was standing in the door, "You're back quick!"

"Yeah! They didn't have the game I wanted, so I just got the flowers. Where shall I put them?"

"Er...just give them to her, say it's early."

He walked into the living room and presented the flowers, "I know they're early, they're for tomorrow."

“It’s Saturday”

“Yeah, but they’ll all be gone by then and anyway they’ll be fresher today.”

“Thank you.”

After all that he managed to escape the lock of Mothers’ day and quickly ran upstairs getting his chair and sat on it backwards.

Thinking again now about why he lets them, why he just doesn’t care, the only problem was is that even though he kept telling himself it was fine, he knew it wasn’t. He knew deep down he didn’t like it a bit, sometimes he just felt like death, cold worthless and useless, other days he felt better than that and only felt like the useless part.

He often used to write, write about anything, but today, he wasn’t even in the mood for that.

He wasn’t tired anymore, but sleeping was the only thing he was in the mood to do. He wasn’t tired enough to sleep so he just sat in his chair face down on his desk until he was startled by someone shouting again, “What?”

“Hey! Get down here and help...”

“Oh b’quiet.”

Before he could remember what he’d forgotten, he’d forgotten again.

He had just remember he had a trip on the Tuesday to one of the local universities to have a talk about options after sixth form and to try out how lessons would differ from lessons as he knew them.

He had been looking forward to this for weeks but within the last few days he wasn’t so sure, he started to doubt as everything whether he wanted to go or not.

It had been a week since the police had caught David and it was today that he would have to stand before court and admit or deny to his crimes, problem was, when it came to serious matters he still had it in him to tell the truth.

As the policemen came to take him he wanted to resist but felt it pointless, it would only rack up more reasons to go down.

As they opened the door he held his hands out and one of them cuffed him, walking him down the corridor and made him sign a form.

After signing the form he was lead out of the police station and into a van, which would transport him to the courts. Once at the courts he was taken out and taken into the court where he was stood in the wooden box.

For the next hour he would stand there, answer when spoken to and answer to what he thought was honest, when he was read the list of charges he confessed and said guilty to all charges but two which he still believes weren’t his fault.

When the jury had to present their verdict he wasn’t happy, maybe even nervous, a feeling he hadn’t felt in a long time.

As each jury member agreed on the verdict he slouched and sank his head.

“Has the jury reached a decision?”

“Yes the jury finds the defendant guilty on all charges except the two he pleads not guilty to.”

“Then I have no choice but to sentence you on all counts except those for the two mentioned. I sentence you to a total of twenty years imprisonment in a medium security prison for a minimum of half that time.”

He felt bad, now would be the time to act if he were to do anything, but with a hundred or more people present it seemed pointless, anyway he had handcuffs so he wasn't going any where.

The policemen standing behind the wooden box, opened the small door and lead him out of the court and into a grey van where he was lead down streets and into a prison about twenty miles from the court. In the back he could only sigh, he wanted to think he didn't care, but deep down he knew he did. Not sure how long he would last thought hard, and for the first time in a long time, prayed.

After a short journey that for David felt like another eternity he would then start for a much longer almost eternity. He was lead out of the van with the other five men in the back and was taken into a holding room with the other men and waited one by one to be sent into being checked, cleaned, clothed and celled. Or as he called it the four "S"s and sat, almost falling asleep.

When Laura woke the next morning, after getting up and ready, she walked out onto the front with no shoes and into the garage. But then when she lifted the sheets where the deer had laid, it had been eaten at by mice and rats, which were now full in her garage.

Leaving it she went back in the house and planned ready for that night, which she would be attending another AA meeting at another venue, she felt the more she places she visited the more people she could help.

During the day she worked as a banker, she would be the one to do interviews and formal advice to customers wanting to open accounts; she sometimes worked behind the desk and served customers. Though since the ATM machines were installed she wasn't needed as often.

Getting ready in the morning was easy for her as she didn't believe in make-up and spending hours looking like a freak, she did put a bit on but she hated over-the-top plastering. She always believed natural was better, that's why she only eats organic fruit and veg, she does eat meat but only free range.

She didn't fuss about clothes either, just pick something and get on; as soon as she was ready she left the front door and got in her car, then drove into town.

It was the Tuesday the Star had been awaiting for weeks, even months, but now it was here, he didn't want it.

He got out of bed and then the moment he remembered he collapsed back into it, groaning he finally stood back up and sighed, "Damn trip! Why'd they have to ruin it?"

And then sat on his bed and slowly half-assed started to get ready.

When he was ready he left his room and finished getting ready until the only thing he had left to do was to grab the things he'd need and leave.

On the way to the school where the bus would be picking them up he dragged his heel hoping that if he was late he might have an excuse, but then realised that was a stupid idea and aimlessly drifted about the street like a drunk on a Friday night.

On the bus he didn't feel much better either, he sat in a seat next to the man who didn't exist and was the only one to put his seat belt on, though he didn't really see the point.

The journey wasn't exactly the best of trips and he hadn't planned on sleeping but if it meant not having to listen to passive screams then he didn't mind.

The Star spent a lot of his time asleep, even when he wasn't tired, he like dreaming, he knew it was the only place where he could be in peace and things usually made sense.

Half asleep but not fully asleep due to suspiciously placed potholes he lay back and thought about things he always thought about and then sat up bored.

When the bus slowed down and stopped for the last time, everyone off except the Star who waited until last, then dragged himself off the bus head facing the floor and grey an the clouds overhead.

The two classes were then instructed to walk across the paved area through the archways with shield and badge on it and wait where the tree was.

Walking along the hexagonally paved courtyard toward the big tree with the wooden short fence around it and then unanimously deciding who gets to sit on the bench, the Star stood and waited for his teacher to come and explain the day.

Ten minutes later one of the two teachers shortly followed by the second came walking over to where we were sat and started telling us about the day, "Right, first we have a sort of like conference with lots of other schools and colleges in the main hall. Then we will be explained to by one of the professor of the uni about the different courses and what it will be like, I know we've told you before but we think actually meeting some students and teachers would be better. Then we will meet some students on the courses you chose and they will tell you how different it is and you will sit at the back of one of their lessons for about half an hour before going back." "What about lunch?"

"Chris! Do you ever think about anything else? Actually that's a good point, after the conference which will last for about two hours you will be allowed half an hour to eat lunch in the cafeteria but you are not allowed to wonder the site. Otherwise the teachers'll take you and we'll have to find you. And your not allowed off site either so no smoking or drinking."

They started walking towards two double doors and told us to get up and wait inside, "Right, we're in there, now luckily we booked earlier so we get the closer seats."

Then the other teacher said, "Yeah its great, so when they ask for volunteers on stage, you'll get picked."

The class then walked through the doors and over to the seats which were slowly being filled by others, they all found a seat on their row and sat down and then started reading the leaflet which had been placed on each seat.

After being checked and searched in every place David had been showered and clothed with prison issue clothes.

He had also been given his basic supplies he was given every week along with all the others.

Walking down the corridor and into a cell on the end, now strip both of possessions and the little dignity he had left.

As he walked down towards his cell he took one last look behind him and caught the last glimpse of freedom as the iron gate was slammed behind him meaning he only not had the cellmate he'd never met before. Entering his cell and then having the door locked behind him, he felt like he had wasted something, but didn't know what.

The other man in the room looked up and sighed, "Suppose I'll be sharing with you for the next few years, well better explain the rules."

"Whose rules?"

"My rules and the prison rules, now the prison rules should be pretty simple and you learn them quick, if you don't, well you'll that out to. As for my rules, you better learn them, if you want me to help you survive this place. Rule number one. What I say goes, if I say I'm right then I'm right, even if I'm wrong. Rule number two. The top bunk's mine, that way if I piss myself, it's you not me who gets the shower, and because I like the top anyway. I'll explain the rest later, now I'm sleeping, oh yeah that's a new one, don't wake me when I'm asleep."

David sat on the bottom bunk and lay back on the cardboard thick mattress feeling the spring poking up in his back, then sat back up and leaned against the wall which was dusty as he found when he leaned forward.

The man lying above awoke, "Hey what's your name?"

"David."

"I'm Steven, but call me Steve." He then lay back down and drifted off again.

David sighed again and looked around the room counting bricks, before giving up after losing count at thirty four.

The Star sat patiently next to two classmates, well by classmates meaning they left him alone, waiting for someone to come onto the stage and start talking.

The rest of the row and everyone else was talking about anything, while the Star sat reading the leaflet, which was a program of what to expect, and he didn't look happy. A few minutes later a woman followed by a man walked onto the stage and the music playing from the massive speakers was turned down and then off.

The woman started to talk and introduced herself, shortly followed by the man.

After two long hours of pointless lecture the hall was allowed to go row by row until the front row which had the Star's class on it left the hall at the back and into the foyer where there teacher told them to stand.

As she appeared she told them they had half an hour to get lunch and reminded them of the rules about wandering, looking specifically at a group of four who were already leaving. "Have fun and meet me back here in half and hour...oh great, I can't trust them."

The class including the Star walked out of the foyer and into the courtyard.

"I'm off for a fag, you?"

"Hey, I thought we were to stay around here."

"Shut up Star, you coming?"

Three of the class walked off, "Seriously, you'll get caught"

"And I said shut it."

"You shut it."

The three boys walked back towards the Star, "Now mate...we've been nice to you compared to some of the others, now don't start telling me what to do."

"Just saying, you can't be in charge of everything, you're not the only the only one here."

Two of the three boys grabbed his shirt and pushed him into the wall, the third then grabbed his mouth and squeezed his cheeks out, "I told you to leave it!"

The Star struggled and then when the third boy clenched and fist the Star burst out of the trap and swung strait at the third boy, problem was, he was carrying something the Star or the other two were expecting.

From behind his back he pulled out a blade and pointed it at the Star, "Right, you don't do that, you could have broke my nose, you stupid prick!"

The other two boys grabbed him again, one of which hitting him on the back of the head, followed by the Star elbowing backwards into his face, "Now look dick, you've gone on hit him too."

He pressed the knife up to his throat and grunted, the Star wasn't having any of it, he taking too much, all the hatred held in him, all the letting go being unwound like a yoyo and swinging the end made of concrete into his apposes face. Pushing forward, grabbing the knife, twisting his hand around and driving into his chest cavity, then withdrawing and striking again. The look in the Star's face had been something no one had seen before; it was of pure evil, pure hatred.

The two boys legged as the Star slowed down his pace, dropped the implement of soul eating and sank his head into his hands and slid down the wall, but before he could say a word the two teachers and the rest of the uni were looking at him. And looking at what he'd done.

One of the teachers approached him, "What happened?"

He didn't answer just sat there and sobbed, then in frustration leaned forward and smashed his head backwards into the brick wall behind him.

Having just done what he'd done the Star sat there and for what would appear to be four hours but was more like four minutes just sobbed.

The teachers did their best to convince him to get up and talk but he just ignored them, though after a few minutes when the repeating high and lows came, he smacked his head against the wall again.

When it got close he finally stood up and walked around the corner out of sight with the two teachers and into the building, "What happened?"

"That stupid son of a..." He gulped and took deep breaths, "He got a knife and tried to kill me, so I stopped him."

"It's ok, just calm down and explain the story in more detail when the police come."

"No! No police!"

"I'm afraid, you'll have to."

He had little energy left but of what he did have he felt for his own sake he's better do something.

As two policemen walked over to the building, he suddenly pushed the teacher back and bolted out the door running around the corner and across the courtyard.

"Stop him!"

The Star didn't care now, he'd made his mind up already, he'd already ruined it so now he had nothing to lose, he felt he'd already lost hope and nothing but matter anymore.

He ran and ran but he couldn't keep it up, if he could run he'd enter sports day and he knew it, but not giving up he carried on a fell to the ground having tripped over a raised slab and fell face first into the ground. The policemen caught with him and didn't know what had happened so they could only act on what they did know.

Getting handcuffs out of his belt he placed them around the Star's wrists and picked him up, he'd landed face first but hadn't caused any damage.

The moment the Star realised what was happening one of the two teachers had caught up with him, "Officer, it wasn't his fault"

“Ok, we’ll have a talk now”

The policemen lead him back inside the building and shut the doors.

The rest of the police then sent the rest of students and university teachers back to lessons and cleared the area and made the rest of the trip go back in the main hall and sit quietly.

After they had had gone they took some blankets out of the ambulance and covered the boy awaiting permission to move him.

They then taped the area around him off and stood around it waiting for further news.

The two police in the room with the Star then asked him a few questions and after a few minutes between each answer they finally managed to get an idea of what had happened, problem was the only witnesses at the time were the two boys holding him.

They were kept and then interviewed separately before deciding to take the three of them plus the two teachers down to the station for a more formal discussion.

“Do you want to phone your parents?”

“No! Not yet anyway.”

David sat thinking about the past years of everything he’d done right from his first crime, and why he carried on. He knew this but didn’t share this anyone, he felt he feel stupid if he did.

He knew he probably shouldn’t have done a lot of things he’d done but didn’t see the point if he was going to pay anyway.

Now bored and confused he lay back down and wanted to sleep, not knowing how long he’d get before being awoke by the guards.

“What you in for?”

“Murd...well many things.”

“No me just armed robbery, got caught trying to raid a bookies, forgot that doors can be locked from the inside and got locked in.”

“That’s one of the things I did, only didn’t get caught for that one.”

“It’s not funny nor anything to be proud of, I’d do anything to rid my sins and start afresh.”

“Oh well I don’t, it’s not that I like doing them, it that I have to, well I don’t but I do.”

“Start talking crap and go to sleep.”

The Star sat in the police station waiting while the other two boys were individually interviewed and then it was his turn again.

“Right, firstly, both those boys who were interviewed separately told exactly the same story that was different from yours.”

“What? They’re lying then, what I said was true, all of it. What they say then?”

“They said, that the boy you attacked was winding you up but you started it but insulting him and then when he asked you to stop you stabbed him.”

“Er...no because that was his knife, I don’t carry weapons.”

“Well it was two against one and when we examine his tomorrow we’ll see whose lying, all I can hope is you’re telling the truth. I’d hate to have to ruin your life by sending you to jail.”

The Star sighed and sank in his seat again, “This is hopeless.”

“Ok, you’ll have to stay here for the night, I’m afraid the law says we can’t let you go until your parents show up and until you phone them to come here, we can’t do that. It was then that the Star gave up on all attempts to win, if anything was worse than this it was telling his parents about it. He simply couldn’t do it, but at the same time, he couldn’t go until he did.

The other two had their names and addresses recorded and released as witnesses and the Star had to decide whether dignity was more important to him than the trouble he’d be in. He’d already lost dignity with everyone else, so his parents and other close family were the only ones left he could trust, the only ones he could be with.

He hadn’t been in trouble with the police before and kept telling them that, but that didn’t make them any more generous in their decisions, he didn’t know why the first time he had, had to be like this.

It was getting close to the day she’d been waiting for. She only had to wait another few days until she would be helping cons become alive again, most people would save that amount of excitement for something more interesting but for her it that was her interesting.

During her meetings whether they be AA or social work at care homes for ill or old she would always start by introducing herself and then explaining why she was there and explaining what she aimed for each individual but as an overall target.

Once she had introduce herself she would then ask each person to do themselves and also include what they would like to achieve and get out of it, so she could then plan accordingly.

Even though she had been doing this for many years, she always still felt quite nervous when meeting new people in case she couldn’t help, she felt she had to help everyone, if she couldn’t help she would feel she’d failed.

She didn’t fail very often, she was very good at what she did, she would help them no matter how bad a person they were or how much they didn’t want the help, she always felt it was her duty to help everyone.

The Star had made his decision and knew what it would take for him to change his mind, he didn’t see the point in trying to get over it, he would try to escape again, but the moment he left ten metres of his chair he was sent back to sit down again.

“So, made your mind up yet?”

“Yes, I’m not going anywhere except home, and without any fuss.”

“Well that wasn’t one of the options, was it?”

“Well make it an option!”

It wasn’t often the Star would get angry or shout at anyone, usually he would keep it cool and keep focused, but that day wasn’t exactly an ordinary day.

“Well we can’t do that, you have two options, you can either phone your parents and tell them to come down here and sort it out, or you can stay here until you do.”

“But I going home and your telling them about this!”

“No, your not, now sit down unless you’re making a phone call.”

The Star waited and waited until he got bored and phoned his parents, only he didn’t know what to say. He dialled their number and waited, they picked up and he started talking and then stopped, “Hello, who is this?”

“It’s me...”

“Oh, where are you, why are you ringing from another phone, you have your mobile.”

“Yeah, I’m in a bit of trouble...”

“What happened?”

“Calm down, I had a bit of trouble at the university with one of the boys in my class and...well you’ll have to come down and I’ll explain.”

“Where are you?”

“Er...”

This was where he started stuttering more than he already was, he didn’t want to say police station otherwise his mum would bite his head off before he could explain. At the same time, he had to tell her otherwise she’d worry.

“Ok, when I tell you this...don’t shout.”

“Why, where are you? Arrested?”

“Sort of”

“What the hell you do think you’re doing! Can you not go on a simple trip and not get yourself...”

“I said stay calm”

“Right I’m on my way, and you better have a good reason.”

He knew the bus journey took just over an hour so he knew she would be about forty-five minutes, which meant it was only a count down until he faced certain death by screaming.

Not sure what to do now he put the phone down and called the policeman, “I phoned her, she’s on her way. Now what?”

“Well now you sit there and wait until she gets here.”

The Star sat back down on the chair he’d sat on and looked up at the ceiling leaning his head on the wall.

Less than an hour of tense and nervous waiting a woman walked into the police station and demanded to see her son, “What’s his name?”

She gave the policeman her son’s name and was lead through into the interview rooms, where the Star was sat. “What the hell did you do?”

“Excuse, he’s feeling bad about it already, can you talk calmly and try and stay control.”

“Don’t tell me how to speak to my son, what did he do?”

“Well why don’t you take a seat in here away from your son and I’ll explain, but not until you stay calm.”

She walked with the policeman into another room and sat down, the Star couldn’t here what they were saying because it was sound proofed and waited fearing the worse.

Ten minutes later, the two of them reappeared and she wasn’t off the top she was actually about to cry. “Right, better get you home, I’ll talk to you in the car. Can’t believe you’d do that.”

“It was an accident, self defence.”

“I said in the car.”

The two of them walked outside and into the car parked just outside, got in and sat down not talking. Then drove down the road before she started talking, “Why? Just why?”

“I told you, it was an accident, self defence.”

“Well that’s not what he told me.”

“Yeah well, not everything people tell you are true.”

“What will your dad say? I mean, you think I go crazy, he’ll go through the roof.” They continued talking and managed to stay calm all the way back home where she told him the final twist, “You have to go to a hearing next week to decide what to do with you, I also can’t let you out unsupervised, but you never go anywhere anyway.”

After a week of deprived withdrawal from the world of lesser sense. The Star now had to face a hearing to find out whether he’d be free but forever condemned to the name of killer or be with the others who were also innocent.

He was ready but nervous, he hadn’t felt so afraid of what he done and what will happen, he didn’t want to go to jail for something he knew wasn’t his fault, but at the same time dreaded being a name everyone would remember infamously.

Either way he was screwed and he knew it, he just wanted it to end but carried on and left the house knowing it could be last time he’d see it. It wasn’t that he wouldn’t get out, just that his family, his parents, his last remaining friends but disown him and be forever behind a smoke screen of lies and torment.

Getting in the car he was driven down to the court, a place he’d be a few more times before he changed, he could help it, he didn’t know who to listen to.

Once at the court he was lead in and escorted by an awaiting policeman who had him stand in a wooden box only to be too familiar and waited for the judge and jury to take a seat and prepare themselves.

Standing on that block was the longest wait the Star had ever known, what was actually half an hour would appear to take forever, but finally ended only to start another wait.

When the judge started and asked the first question, the Star couldn’t answer, he knew it but his tongue had swallowed itself almost and he couldn’t dare to open his mouth for the fear of speaking lies or even nothing at all.

He opened his mouth and tries to speak.

“Go on, we’ve got all day.”

“Can’t speak.”

“Can you describe the events that happened?”

“I can’t”

“Take your time, then answer the question.”

This went on for over an hour and every minute that past the Star felt more and more like useless excuse for a life but he didn’t give up, this was another of his qualities, he just kept sailing.

At the end of the hearing the judge announced the verdict and the ten seconds before he read it out the Star felt like he was on reality tv only with the result being public humiliation plus more time on his own.

“Right, the jury have decided your actions are not that of murder but of self defence as you pleaded, however due to the brutality of the attack you are instead to be placed in care of mental health and will be counselled three times a week until you are cleared of your issues.”

The Star wasn’t sure whether to smile or go back into his shell, he simply nodded and would figure out whether it was a good thing or a bad thing when he got home and change think on his own, a place to release his stress and tensions.

When he got home he went into his room and lay face down on his bed and lay there thinking for over an hour before falling asleep and dreamt of his usual perfect dreams where he was free and wasn’t restrained to the life of him.

Awaking suddenly and realised he'd been lucky but still not as satisfied as he wanted, he knew he would never be able to go to school so definitely not university as he often hoped. His dreams were just that, restricted to the few hours a day he called peace, only they weren't always perfect, they were often nasty, worse than he could imagine in real life.

Sitting up he sighed again and looked around, he thought it was over he would always be known as the psycho and knew getting a job would be hard, not impossible but hard. His first meeting with his counsellor was the next day and he wasn't looking forward, he was expected a shrink with patronising reactions and would already know the answer before he got there.

Until then he could only imagine the good things left in his life and then staying optimistic, unlike the pessimistic mind is in now.

The next day he awoke and like most days realised what he had in store that day and wanted to sleep and forget everything, to lie there not to be awake.

He got up eventually and thought about what he would have to expect, he thought deep and hard but couldn't fathom an answer, then just got ready dragging his heels hoping like magic it would just go away.

Only he knew magic was mad up and confined to fictional books of which he didn't name but knew too well they were all just made up.

The only thing that would help him now was luck and he didn't much in that either, he believed in luck but not the old wives tales that go with it. But either way he still tried hard to avoid ladders and not breaking mirrors, it was more of just one of his many habits from his childhood rather than superstition.

Walking down the stairs he hoped he'd accidentally fall and maybe break his neck or maybe just both his legs, that way he could avoid seeing this crazy people woman who was probably more crazy herself but he hadn't met her yet so he didn't know. He ate breakfast for a rarity and left the house after being completely ready, he was drove down to the building where she worked and dropped off, his mum who took him told him he'd be back in an hour and hoped that was all.

He entered the building nervous as usual and when the woman waiting inside told him to sit down he became confused and stayed stood up before eventually sitting down in an armchair. He looked around the room, he'd expected more of a clinic, but then realised why it wasn't.

"Hello, I'm Mary and I'm here to help you get better."

He was right about the patronising, "You'll see we have comfy chairs, that way you relax more and feel more at home, it's easier to talk to you and found out what's wrong."

"Right"

"Start by telling me what you did, I already know, but it helps if you explain it me in your own words."

He explained and regular sighed between sentences, he hoped it'd be the last time he'd have to tell the story but not quite.

After about three-quarters of an hour of talking to a woman who sounded like she need the help he didn't feel any better about anything, mainly because she talked in riddles that made no sense.

He left the building and waited on the street and realised his mum hadn't arrived yet to pick him up, so he stood waiting and across the road he saw an old woman had dropped her purse. He crossed the road to give it to her but then his other mind kicked

in and thought what had he to live for, and wondered if he'd already blown it, it was already downhill then why be nice.

He took the purse but Mary the counsellor had seen him through the window and hurried across the road, she snatched it off him and gave it to the woman, "Excuse me, you dropped this."

"I was about to do that!"

"No you weren't I saw the way you hesitated."

He was confused why she had lied for him but he didn't mind, he's already got two fivers and pocketed them.

As he crossed back across the road his mum turned up and he got in the front passenger side and sat down. "How'd it go?"

"It was ok, she explained a few things, didn't really understand some bits."

"Well it was your first time, you'll get used to it. Your next meeting with her is Wednesday, if you go Monday, Wednesday and Saturdays then that'll be ok. It doesn't really matter what days just as long as you go three times a week."

David had just fallen asleep when he was woken; he was given ten minutes to be ready to eat. He sat up yawned sucking in the world before lowering his head and shaking it, it didn't really wake him any further it was just a habit.

When the guard came back, he opened the door and lead the two men down the corridor into a room serving as a dining area, the choice wasn't as good as he'd been used to but though he didn't really deserve any better so didn't complain.

The choice wasn't a choice more of a lucky dip, seeing as the food wasn't really food more of an excuse to keep useless prisoners alive, he chose the one that looked the most edible.

"Good choice, if I'd make a suggestion, sit over there, that's where I sit, you don't want to go on that side, trust me."

"Ok, how does it work here?"

"Basically eat your food, talk quietly, behave."

David looked down the food in front of him and wondered what it was.

"Don't look at it, eat it."

He plunged his spoon into it and slowly brought it towards his mouth, gulped and ate it. Then realised it wasn't as bad as he'd expected and ate some more.

David hadn't clue what to expect over the next few years but he imagined it could only get worse, he had no idea where to go when he felt down, he didn't trust anyone and no one trusted him, he was lost and on his own again.

The Star got home and wondered whether taking the money was the right thing but from then on he decided any decision he made was the right one whether he wanted to or not. Anyway he didn't see the point in trying any more he knew he'd already failed, why bother trying the long lasting effort of underachieving, yes he was able to do great in lessons but at socialising is was a different story.

He took the money out of his front pocket and placed it in his wallet, it now belonged to him and he wasn't having any of it, the only way they would stop him but be to actually stop him. And seeing as he no longer had anything to look forward to, he didn't care about a thing.

Anyway he wasn't allowed out the house unattended anymore so that didn't bother him because he never went out anyway. He had his computer though he was now also not allowed online for fears of threats to and from him from the ones he once called friends.

For the next three years he figured, or however long it would take to get a single thought from this Mary, he would sit every night on his computer doing nothing particular but wondering why.

In couple of days later on the Wednesday it was time to see Mary his counsellor again, the woman of many fears and many confusion. He didn't understand a word she said, he sat there on the Monday for nearly an hour and got nothing except a waste of time.

The Star's mum drove him down to the building where she Mary worked and drove off leaving the Star to walk into the building. As he crossed the road to the door three boys from his class walked around the corner and started laughing, problem was he didn't see the funny side of it.

As they got closer he no longer backed off and ignored them he had no fear in taking again, he done it once, once was already too many so another three wasn't going to bother him.

As they approached him he lashed out and clipped the closest one on the nose and before he could regain balance the other boy had already charge him. "Bad mistake!" The Star was no longer a quiet boy who kept things to himself but to be loud and growled through his teeth.

The Star who once would have done anything to get away and save himself from bother and trouble felt he'd already blown it so didn't see like he had anything to lose and went in. This was something nobody had expected of the Star, something he'd never done before, something to shock but not to completely stun.

Getting his left in as well he managed to get the other boy to reconsider the challenge and he back away. Reconsidering was something the Star would spend a lot of time doing not he never did, just based any option of instinct.

When the curtains opened and then quickly closed again in the building to the side of him a woman he couldn't see came running out, "You lot clear off! I tried to tell you about this on Monday."

It was Mary but the Star had stopped listening to anyone, including himself.

They walked inside the building and sat down in the same chairs as on the Monday and he fell back as if he'd fallen asleep.

"Wake up! We haven't got time for this, if I'm to help you and pass you for normal then you'll have to concentrate. At the moment you're deemed a risk to the public and you are allowed to go out on your own."

"So what then?"

"Well I just stopped you from fighting, don't start with your self defence story I'm not interested, I'm just here to fix you. Now being classed as needed help I can help you, if you do something wrong then I can support you and stop you from getting in trouble. But only if you keep attending this program and you make an attempt to improve, I've dealt with many of your type, don't think you're special because your not."

He didn't feel like she was helping, he hadn't come to be insulted to be helped, just because he had to, though he didn't mind the free biscuits he got.

For the next hour again he sat there listening to this women without a clue are a care she was saying, then when it was time for his to go he stood up and left.

He left the building and onto the street and waiting for his mum again, on the other side of the road where he'd been dropped off a woman was struggling with a man. The Star crossed to help, "Hey kid, help me out here, grab her handbag, give yer half." He had expected to try and help her but now was helping the aggressor, handing it over to him and receiving half a large wad of money, as the woman ran down the road shouting. The Star cleared quickly before anyone saw him including Mary who looked out the window just as he had walked around a corner leaving only the man to blame. The man then also legged it as a car only too familiar pulled up beside the Star making him jump, "Oh hi, didn't see you there."

The Star then got in the car and waited again until Saturday.

On the Saturday the Star didn't know how long he could last with the woman who was crazier than he was, leaving the house felt like a chore and arrived at the building again.

He entered but this time his mum waited outside in the car until he'd gone in, Mary had phoned and told her about breaking his ban by driving off early.

He sat down again and sighed. "It's not all that bad is it? I don't smell do I?"

Sighing he sat up from his lazy slouched position and looked at Mary with a look of bewilderment and waited for a response, "Right I was thinking, maybe you need something to do, something to take your mind of things, it might help you relax and slowly return to a way I still surprised at."

"Like what?"

"Well, do you have any hobbies? Any interests?"

"Not really"

"Your not being very helpful, how about a job, I could help you get a job, it'd only be a simple job, probably not much pay, but it would let you have a chance to be with other people and maybe gradually become more confident again."

"More confident?"

"Yeah, all your problem is is that you lost confidents in yourself and now you don't feel like your able to say no anymore. Correct?"

"Suppose"

"Anything particular, I wouldn't recommend anything with customers, not yet, you're still a bit unpredictable, maybe in a few years or so but until then maybe something more like stock."

For first time since the incident the Star looked like he may be able to work with this idea but only try it he knew he was unable to keep control though if something went wrong.

"Yeah I like the sound of that, where?"

"Oh, you like it do you? Ok how about a supermarket like the one down the road, well obviously it'll depend on whether they have any vacancies and other things."

"Ok but won't they, well..."

"Yeah, I'll have to try and convince them that it'll be for the best, it's my job I help you in more than one way, I don't get paid or I feel satisfied unless you come out of here in two years or so and are normal again."

"Ha...all about the money"

Mary didn't mind that he was being cheeky nor that was still unwilling to change because she was getting conversation out of him, which was already part of step one to make him more comfortably to talk to done.

She didn't mind what he was saying, the more she could get out of him the better, every now and then she would suggest something hoping he would then answer the way she wanted him to, but not always.

"Right, when you've gone I'm going to phone the supermarket and see what they can do and then maybe in a few meetings you may be able to start."

The Star left that session actually feeling excited about something for the first time in a long while, even before the incident. Though he knew he'd still find it difficult knowing there's nothing left worth trying for but he felt it might at least give him a chance to get back to normal.

For the next three sessions with the third being on the Friday because of conveniences he managed to go a whole week without any events happening and felt good about it only he still had a short fuse. This was found multiple times during the week when his parents suggested certain things that made him go off the top but nothing that couldn't be fixed.

On the Monday he turned up and was informed he had managed to get a place but only under certain conditions, however being unstable Mary or any of her colleagues could cover it and get him out of trouble without threatening the job.

She then spent the next fifteen minutes explaining the conditions and what he'd be up for then when he acknowledged he understood it he waited for when he would start.

"Right, you can start anytime, so tomorrow or whenever, just go down to the supermarket whenever and they'll train you and make sure you aren't likely to cause any aggro or havoc."

"Right...ok, I'll see when I can start and then I do my best."

The next day after having informed his parents of the news he was dropped off at the supermarket and lead inside until he had been met the person to help him start, then his mum was allowed to leave and returned home.

He was lead upstairs into the staff offices and sat down with the man and started talking about the job and what restrictions he might have due to his court order.

"Right, ever worked anywhere before?"

"No"

"First job then, I remember my first job, wasn't here, I couldn't get in here then, you must be lucky then."

"Not really"

"Oh, ok I tell you what, I'll explain what the job involves and what you'll be doing, you just nod and smile and tell me if you don't understand."

For the next ten minutes or more the man sat talking to the Star and wasn't having any luck getting anything out of him, then came up an idea.

"I know, why don't you write about a hundred words about why you applied here and what it means to you, I'll just be in the next room."

As the man left the room the Star picked up the pen and started writing on the piece of paper he'd been given. He always found it easier to write and found he could communicate far better through writing than through speaking.

"He's hopeless he is, can't get a word out of him, you sure we want him?"

"He'd been given the job through his counsellor there's not much we can do, but we can still sack him if he misbehaves, but we have to give him chances."

Before the man returned from the other room where he was talking to some of his colleagues drinking machine coffee he decided to wait a few more minutes.

The Star noticed the man had left his wallet on the table so the Star picked it up took a fiver out and replaced it just as the man walked back in the room.

“Finished?”

“Yeah”

He handed the piece of paper over to the man and he started reading it, “Right I see...ok.”

Then he finished trying to explain the work he'd be doing before explaining procedures and regulations, which the Star didn't look too amused by.

“Ah...cheer up it's not that bad, we all have to do, anyway if you listen now you're your supervisor won't have to keep reminding you, if you ignore me it will even more boring because you'll have to supervised even more.”

He picked up his wallet and opened it, “That's strange, I'm sure there was five pound more than that, oh well.”

Standing up he lead the Star out of the office and down back onto the customer level where he took him to the area where he'd be working, “Right, you'll be working here, you'll be making sure the shelves are full of whatever's on each shelf. You only have to worry about these two aisles here, mainly cardboard box stuff but you may be needed now and then to help out in other areas, so don't be expected it all easy.”

Another man slightly older walked over to the of them, “Right, this will be your supervisor, you do what he tells you, if he has any trouble with you it gets back to me.”

“Hi, I'm usually an alright guy but if you screw me about then I won't have it ok, now I'll start you by showing you the safety procedures when fetching stock from the warehouse.”

The Star looked around the building and then sighed, he had no interest in stealing the products off the shelf, nor money from the tills, he just wondered how long he would have to be like this until he would get over it and get back to normal.

He had been told by Mary it was just a phase, a traumatising event made him go crazy but with time would heal, only problem, he only hoped so as he knew something different.

He missed the old him but knew he couldn't return, or trying would only be futile, there was nothing for him now and that's the only thing he felt sure of, he felt now it was all about self preservation, the strongest survive. He just hoped time was a good healer because his faith had been lost in a sea of hatred and misery.

“Wake up! Better not day dream we start paying you, ha, then again you wouldn't be the first nor the last.”

“So where'm I going?”

“Through here, mind the forklift, usually you'll be fine but sometimes it'll be moving about and you gotta watch out, if it hits you you'll know about it.”

David returned to his cell and once again engaged in pointless boredom simply staring at the walls in the dark waiting for his moment to come.

He had no idea how it'd end would he knew it wouldn't go well, he could only wait for his time to come, something he feared now more than anything.

The boredom wasn't new to him, most people would take months to adjust to it but he didn't need to because he'd already done his share of training for a life of no point before.

For every minute he wasted someone else could be having fun, and he often envied those with better more fortunate lives, he never used to fuss but now it got to him and he flips when he hears good news.

His cellmate passed him a book, "Read this, it'll keep your mind off things, relax you, it's ok."

David took out of his hand and read the title and paced it on his bed lying back down. After five minutes he sat up and opened the book, reading the first page, he read for about forty-five minutes but lost track of time, after about three chapters he had got hooked and wanted to carry on reading. It was first time in a long David smile at the odd joke and enjoyed something new, he read the book slowly so he could more time reading it. His only problem would be when he'd finished it he would be bored again, but it gave him new light on the world of fiction giving him chance to feel better about himself.

Sometimes it's the small things that make a big difference, he'd heard that phrase before and realised now what it meant, before he just ignored it thinking it was stupid.

When the Star got home that day he felt relived that he'd a day where for at least a few hours of it he felt normal again, he felt like he hadn't felt in a long time, he also felt like he knew it would only last a short while.

Some days he would be happy and feel like the world had turned it's common hatred of him off and let him live again, while other days he felt someone had turned it back on again. These were the days were he would commit to his life again still feeling strongly.

In general he was getting better but then every now and then he do something setting him back to square one.

When he was finally allowed back on the streets by himself but still had to attend his counselling he decided to go down town and buy himself the game he wanted in the first place.

As he walked into town he saw three boys sitting on someone's car, and it looked like they were doing something they shouldn't be doing. "Hey you guys! Get off! That's not yours!"

"Hey look who it is, if it isn't killer. Stupid prick! What you do that for?"

The Star had learnt too many times what happens when he ignores them, and seeing as it no longer meant anything to him he didn't feel at all bothered when he pushed one of them off the car.

The boy slid off the bonnet and landed on his backside and almost smacked his head on the ground, he stood up and eyeballed the Star.

"You stupid son of...!"

He went to push the Star back but the Star had already kneed him where it hurts, and he keeled over, the other two boys then stood up and one smacked the Star on the top of his head with his fist.

But what he hadn't learned was that the Star had been doing small workouts at night when his parents were asleep and doing press-ups by the fifty, this wouldn't sound much, but over a few weeks it adds up.

The Star then took his own liberty and jabbed him in the rib cage where he keeled over resting on hand on the wall while gasping for breath, the other boy then picked up a brick lying loosely on the wall and slammed it on the Star's foot.

The brick bounced off the pavement and the Star picked it up and threw it back at the boy causing him to fall over then without thinking, as was often the case, he picked it up again and smashed it again.

When a member of the public came running over she phoned the police who arrived before the Star could run.

They took the Star down to the floor and cuffed him, "Damn it! You idiots!"

"Hey don't you be slagging off my fellow officers."

They picked him up and sat him in the back of the van as a woman from the bakery came running out almost dropping her cakes and started talking to policeman in charge.

"Officer! Officer! That boy's with me, I'm his counsellor and I have to help him by not letting you arrest him."

After ten minutes of confusion and persuasion the policemen let him go and drove off. "What are you doing? Why'd you risk doing that now? We just spent the last few weeks progressing to a point where I thought I could sign you off as normal. But that won't happen now, not a while."

"What? They attacked me so I stopped them."

"You're a menace, a threat to society, that's what you are, you'll be lucky if you don't have to be restricted from the public streets again, you'll be very lucky."

He sighed, "I couldn't help it, they attacked me, I had to save myself somehow and thought rather them than me."

"You could of left before it got too violent."

"Well I used to but that's not me anymore, I'll just have to make sure I calm down again. Mind not telling my parents?"

"I won't tell them if you make that your last attack on people like that, there's no need for it, there's man ways of avoiding it, just try not to do it again."

The two of them walked down the street, "I can't let you go home on your own, I'm holding you off the streets again for another two weeks or until you I think you are ready again, which ever is the longest."

Mary walked the Star back to his house after another failed attempt to buy the game he'd been wanting to buy, it was almost like a curse had been placed on that game and every time he tried to buy it his life would sink a new low.

Not sure on how much longer he could take it he returned home and told his parents they didn't have the game so he'd try again in a few days time.

Even though he had issue with the other sins at that moment in his state of mind he still felt strongly about lying and would only use it in non-important ways.

This of which wasn't important so he felt a small lie that wasn't relevant to anything would be ok.

After returning home the Star sat in his room with the door closed and wanted a bit of time to reflect on what had happened and where was heading.

He figured overall he was progressing but could quite bring himself to admit he had issues and it was that along with other things that stopped him from returning to his old self.

The problem was he quite enjoyed being like the way is was and didn't want to return, it was almost like they were two completely different people now. One was the quiet one who never did anything only let every thing pass him by without a care the other who wouldn't take anything and wasn't afraid to get messy.

Sitting on his chair that regularly fell apart he rested his face on his desk and thought quietly, with the occasional unexpected mutter or talking to himself. Twice he nearly fell asleep before sitting up and deciding how to take it from now on, something he could plan on but knew no matter how hard he tried if he had the chance he'd take it. He knew this would make it harder but he knew nothing was easy.

The Star slept that night like all other nights, constantly moving and unable to put his mind to rest and sleep, he spent all night thinking so when he woke the next morning after only about three hours sleep it wasn't surprising that he was tired.

Getting up by dragging he muttered the same thing under his breath that he says to himself every morning, "Why am I still here?"

Getting dressed anybody including the Star himself would have thought he'd learnt how to do it right, but like most things in his life, confusion and stress caused him to lose these simple things sometimes.

When he eventually allowed back out on the streets by himself, which was supposed to be two weeks later but forgot to tell his parents so as far as they knew was that day, the Star decided to go into town and try and buy the game again.

He went into his room and counted thirty pounds out which was the price of the game and left the house walking down into town. He had no problem with defending himself now but still didn't want to go looking for trouble. So as he passed the boys sitting on the post box and street sign he lowered his head hoping they wouldn't see him. At least that way he would try and avoid them giving him change to regain confidence in himself.

He walked down the high street and into the shop where he the game was and walked over to new releases shelf and started looking down the chart for the game he wanted. When he had first wanted the game it was at number four now was down to eighteen, but he wasn't bothered he just wanted the game, he planned on playing it that night as he'd finished all his other games in his free time.

He picked the box up and started walking over to the desk but then stopped and looked at the back, the sticker with the price had been placed on the back instead where the one on the front was different to the ones on the other games.

The problem was the front one said thirty pounds as he had but the other one said forty, of which he only had the thirty.

He knew he couldn't afford the game and then thought about consequences. "The worse that could happen would be that I get caught, but seeing as I've nothing to lose then why bother thinking about what I should do instead of what I could do."

Looking around to see where the staff on the counter were and where other people in the shop were he quickly legged it out the shop holding the game and then walked quickly but not suspiciously.

Problem was someone had already seen him, and was now chasing him down the street. He just caught a glimpse of the man behind him and then took off, running faster and faster, if only he'd run that quickly at school, he'd win every time, though he knew it more down to embarrassment than actually winning.

Every few seconds the Star would take a look over his shoulder and then run further until the man gave up and let the Star slow down in his own pace before walking casually like he hadn't done anything wrong.

Getting back home he quickly ran up to his room and set up his games console ready to play the new game he'd bought and opened the disk case then stopped.

He had to look again, he just froze and looked at the contents of the disk case, the box was empty, he'd forgotten that the shop for the last two months had started keeping the games behind the till and not in the boxes themselves.

He wasn't happy, he wasn't even pissed, he was a state of mind only reached on a few occasions, including the incident that started the problem, the whole reaction in the first place.

He managed to break free of his ice prison and slammed the box into the floor then jumping on it, he'd beat the ice prison but not the fire prison.

Picking the box up and throwing it at the wall again he threw a tantrum worse than when he was two for at least ten minutes but if you include the rest then maybe half an hour. Not in the mood he jumped on his bed and flopped face first into it, before eventually calming down and doing what he did best, sleeping.

After two months David still sat bored in his cell, something he knew he'd have to get used to, but hadn't yet figured out how. He knew he would eventually adapt, the only question he kept asking himself was when, he wasn't sure how long he would last by himself, on his own and with only his imagination to keep him entertained.

As a guard walked down the corridor he opened David cell and lead him down to the front where a man was sat on a chair.

"David, don't worry you're not in any further trouble, we've been looking over your file and it would appear you fit perfectly to the description for someone to do a trial we've never done before. If successful you'll be eligible for being rehabilitated a lot quicker than first planned, if you don't then, oh well you won't lose anything. So what do you say?"

"What do I have to do?"

"Just behave and let the woman coming to help you do her job."

"Woman? Sod off! I don't need help!"

"Well you are in prison."

"Let me just do my time, I don't want to make it any worse by ending up attacking her when she frustrates me by patronising me, like they all do."

"Don't worry, she's very professional and will do her job right."

"So what's the catch? You seem awfully keen about this."

"You'll be...in custody of her so if you try anything funny you'll be strait back in here for even longer."

"Like I said, I don't want to risk doing anything worse than it already is for me."

"Actually do don't have a choice we were simply asking for your opinion not your permission, you'll be meeting her tomorrow, I suggest you be calm and relaxed for then."

One of the men stood near David then grabbed his cuffs and led him back down the corridor and into the cell before removing them and locking the door. David then sat back on his bed and smacked his head once against the brick hidden behind a hundred years of dust and repaints.

"What was that about?"

"Er...they want me to do some kind of trial where some dumb social worker tries to make me better, yeah like I'm only five, don't know why they chose me."

"Eh...I don't know, all I know is they would never pick me, I'll be in here the full sentence, your always lucky, that's why."

When the Star awoke from his tantrum he slowly raised his head and saw the wall which he'd drawn a small picture of someone and then sunk his head back into the bed before rolling over looking at the ceiling.

For everyday the Star lived he felt was another day wasted, he didn't see where this was going so spent a lot of his time thinking about things he didn't understand knowing he never will understand.

Not knowing what to do he slowly stood up and picked up the game case off the floor and threw it under the wardrobe but not as hard as before. He started to hum his favourite tune that he had no idea what it was, but he liked the sound of it, he'd heard it somewhere before and always hummed it to himself when he was in this mood. He then sat back on the end of his bed where he'd sat so many times that the corner had flattened springs in his mattress so it bent over and dropped his face into his hands and talked to himself for the next five minutes.

Three days later the Star was planning on going up town again, even though he knew full well he wasn't allowed, to him as long as his parents didn't know and he didn't get caught then he'd be ok.

He headed up the street and turned onto the main road where he saw Mary leaving her house and getting into her car, the Star quickly spun around and faced the wall and put his hood up hoping she wouldn't see him. As she drove past him she ignored him drove right past, he then waited until he thought she would be out of sight and turned back around and continued walking down the road towards town.

He had no interest in games now, he just wanted to get out of the house and away from his wallpapered prison, the place he once called home but now hated more than himself.

Hating himself wasn't anything new, he'd disliked himself ever since he was young but since a few weeks ago that dislike turned into hate.

He could hang around the area where he lived but it would be easier for people to notice him so he thought if he entered shops and wandered about crowds he wouldn't be spotted to easy.

Walking down a narrow passage behind the bookshop to get to the other side of high street without having to walk around the market the Star saw two men much older than him standing leaning against the old brick wall.

"What you looking at kid?"

"Hey! Move! Anyway I'm not a kid, I said Move!"

The Star tried pushing one of the men out of his way but he was almost twice his weight, lucky for him the man knew better, unfortunately, his friend didn't.

"Hey kid! If you know what best for you I suggest getting out of here mighty quickly."

"Screw you, you don't bother me, I coming through now move."

The man who stood against the wall just stood there not saying anything but the one now stood up pushed the Star and he landed flat on his arse, then when he stood up the man jabbed him in the stomach making the Star bend over.

The Star then drew an implement from behind his back and drove in towards the man blocking the alley, the man moved and hit the Star on the top of his head and while still wobbling he pushed him back in his arse.

The man then stood over the Star with the implement and pointed it at the Star's throat but the Star was not having any of it, if he didn't let the closest thing he could call a friend get away with it then this guy wouldn't get left out.

The Star grabbed the man's wrist and turned it around before thrusting it upwards slicing his apple for him, unfortunately for the man he wasn't holding an apple. He fell down to the ground as the Star stood up and the other man ran down the alley but the Star wasn't bothered about him, dropping the object he had now further ruined his life with and ran down the alley and turned right and then into the multi-storey car park. Where he raced to the top tripping each time over the chunky concrete steps and then had to pick himself up again and race to the top not knowing where he'd go after that.

As he reached the top level he looked over the railing and saw how far down it be if he were to accidentally fall, though that wasn't why he went up there, he edged back from the railings and walked through the middle of the concrete checking over his shoulder few seconds.

He hid behind a car between it and a concrete pillar, he sat down on the old concrete and wondered whether he'd be found, he sat there for over ten minutes before slowly standing up and making his way car by car to the other exit.

Behind him he could see and hear two police cars and an ambulance blocking off the end of the alley where he didn't want to think about again, now he just wanted to get out of it but he knew he couldn't.

He wouldn't be allowed, even if he wanted to, greater forces would stop him and send him back to his bad ways, he wanted out but didn't know who could help. He knew it was too late, Mary tried but she was useless, she didn't understand what went through his mind, what he felt that other didn't. Every time he tried to tell her she ignored him or he just couldn't face her in case she thought he was more insane than he already was.

He edged towards the exit on the other side and opened the door into the stairwell as four policemen emerged from the other stairwell where the Star had just come up from. He quickly but as quietly as he could he ran down the concrete steps as he heard steps coming up from below. He couldn't go down so he opened the door to the level under the very top one and ran past the cars and saw the doors at each end open, quickly, only having ten second or even less to think he did. He opened the door of the back seat to the car, which he was hid behind and found it to be unlocked; he got in and quietly closed the door before pretending to be asleep.

As the police met in the middle he closed his eyes and sat until he thought they were gone then opened eyes and saw they'd left, about to get out the car he noticed a woman was now sat in the driver's seat and hadn't noticed him yet.

He could now either get out and give it all away or wait until got home and then sneak out, only problem was that meant hiding in the back for possibly up to half an hour. He hid the rug she used when she went to parks over him so at least if she looked in the rear-view mirror she wouldn't see him, and slouched down as low as he could, breathing quietly.

The car started to reverse before pulling round and going down the ramp to the lower level and then the same again until at ground level where the exit was, once on the road he was safer because she wouldn't have to use her mirrors as much. So as long as he stayed silent he wasn't there.

She drove down the road for what the Star thought was twenty minutes and he was starting to need to go somewhere, and not just home. The rug he lay under was old and used very rarely so it was full of dust, which was starting to make the Star's nose twitch. He wasn't sure whether if he sneezed she would here him, problem was he was about to find out, the dust was making him breathe more heavily now and more irregular, and sneezed while holding his nose.

“What was that? Oh well probably just the car.”

He was lucky but needed to sneeze again, he lifted the rug and looked up the road and saw they were on a country road but travelling, and he couldn't see any buildings except the odd farm here and there.

Holding his nose he sneezed again, “What was that? I heard it again, oh what ever.”

He covered the rug back over his head and body and curled back up in the corner and stayed there for another few minutes until he felt the car was slowing down. Looking from under the rug again he saw she was turning into a petrol station and waited while she stopped and filled up. She got out the car and walked round to the tank cap which unluckily for him was on his side so she could see him through the window, he lay completely still and waited for her to leave the car and enter the shop to pay.

When she disappeared around the corner he opened the door and leaped out tripping and falling flat on his face before standing, closing the door and legging it over the barrier and onto the road.

Laura was sitting in her living room when the phone rang, she answered it and listened for nearly two minutes before talking herself.

After the call had ended Laura smiled to herself and put the phone down, she'd just been told that the prison visit was still on and arrangements had been made for to start the next day. The men she'd be working with were named and she informed about each of the five men and what they might be like to work with, one of which was called David and was described as calm but volatile so she'd better be careful with she tells him and how close to get.

Sitting down in her favourite chair she started planning for each man how she would help them and what things might help them. She pulled up a small table next to her and picked up a piece of small paper and started writing with a pencil about each man, after each man she would read it back again and then pick up and separate piece of paper and start again.

After all five she read each through again and sat back smiling before picking up a book from off the table and reading from where she'd left off.

The Star fell out of the car and started running across the road out of sight and found he had no idea where he was, then when he picked up a newspaper left on a bench just inside a small park area he sighed.

It was the local newspaper of the town the other side the town he'd come from so he had further to travel back because he had to go back to the town and then from there to his house. Problem was he had no idea about where anything was in this town because he had never been there except to pass through a few times, he also didn't know the way back or how far he was.

Running down the road he came he saw a signpost with distances and directions to a village he knew only too well to be two miles away from his house, but from the post to that village was seven.

He had never walked that far and he had just less than an hour to be back because he had a meeting with Mary in the afternoon, not knowing how long it would take him he started walking down the road, which quickly turned into a country lane.

As he walked down the edge of the road he grew tired after only a mile and a half, the Star wasn't one for exercise, something he was not usually very good at or really bothered about, but when he needed to he could really run like a jet.

After another few hundred meters he was starting to get tired and knew he could not possibly walk all the way home. As he walked around the corner he entered a village that he had not heard of before and sat down on a bench where a bus pulled up.

He heard the noise of the buses engine and looked up, the sign on the bus said the name of the town he lived in after the word via for another town.

He climbed on the bus a produced a fiver not knowing the prices and was given change which he almost dropped as he took a seat.

When the bus dropped him off at a bus stop in the town he'd come from he knew where he was and knew he also had ten minutes left to get home to be taken to the meeting. He knew if he walked it would take him too long but running would look suspicious and he was still too close to the alley where he planned never to walk again, so he walked until out of the high street before speeding up the pace.

Running down the road he passed some of friends if he'd call them that and ignored their chants and heckling.

As he passed them he skidded to almost a snail's pace before walking as quickly as he could without it looking like he was running, once around the corner he ran again before finally slowing again as he passed down his drive and entered through the back door.

"Ready?"

"Ye...ah"

The Star had to try and hide the fact he was out of breath because he didn't want her to know he'd run home.

"Ok well let's go then"

They walked back down the drive and into the car where he was drove down to the other end of town where his counsellor worked, and entered the building where like usual he sat down.

"Feeling happy?"

"What? Yeah I mean, yeah I'm fine."

"Anything bothering you? Anything you're worried about?"

"Er..."

The Star started thinking not sure whether to mention what had happened earlier that day but then though about what she'd do he reconsidered.

He felt if he told her then she'd make him attend meetings for the next two years not sure he could face that decided not to tell her.

"What is it?"

"Nothing...I'm fine...just thinking about how much I like things now."

For the next half an hour they sat and talked about how the Star was progressing completely unaware of what had happened that day, Mary was considering lifting the ban again but still hesitant to whether he was ready.

David was sitting in his cell again and had no intention of meeting this woman who he felt strongly was against him, he generally didn't assume people disliked him but when he was forced into being made to let a woman he didn't know help him he had different feelings.

He didn't want to let the woman help him because he already knew the outcome, she would patronise him and he would want her to go screw herself but wouldn't be able to say it because he still had some pride.

Not sure whether the whole thing was joke or not he decided not to let it bother him and started reading the book from where he'd left off. Normally a book of that size of that size would take him a few months to read. But when you're in prison and have nothing to do all day because your only reason to wake up has been taken away then it would take him considerably less time.

The book wasn't necessarily challenging, it was just a book that the man who David now called a friend found and gave it to him, the story was probably aimed at a younger age group but when it's all you've got then you make the most of it.

David had been informed he only had until the next day before he would be meeting this woman he referred to in his own mind and when he spoke to others as the quack. He couldn't sit still even when he was asleep he was constantly moving, rolling over, sitting up, lying down and ferreting about, he usually just thought of it as a small thing, nothing major.

Getting home the Star once again took to the fortress of his bedroom shutting the door and lying down on his bed not sure whether he'd done good, bad or just wasted another hour.

The Star a few days later was still bored having not attended sixth form now for a few weeks and only having his part time job for a few hours a week to keep him occupied, apart from that he was free.

Free from the world of work, world of earning a living and coming home to more work, but not free from a world of sin of which he's now left his foot print in the sea of brimstone.

Not knowing how long he could last working taking tins of baked beans and boxes of cakes and every time the women who could eat the whole shop replacing the shelved just to be taken again. He had so far not made an enemy of himself with the older employees but he had reasons to suspect they didn't want him there; that they'd do anything to keep him from coming again.

The Star started work late again that day and it wasn't the first time either in fact he made quite a habit of it, problem for him was he gets paid by the hour so missing the first ten minutes means he only does fifty minutes which won't get him paid.

The customers had also been complaining about him saying he wasn't arranging the item on the shelves properly and just piling them up any way he felt like. He also had been told to stop being rude when he was asked to help them or where you locate certain items because they were getting the quite generalised answer of "I don't know" or "Sod off".

Signing in and putting on his clothing he had been issued he dragged himself over to the shelves where he known now only too well with his older employees including his supervisor.

He found a shopping trolley from where his supervisor had been stood and started loading tins of baked beans and hooped spaghetti onto the shelf in front of him and I the process knocked over the stack that was already there.

Two of the tins on the top bounced off his head and another three on his feet, "Owww! The beggar!"

Picking all the tins up before anyone could see he quickly stuffed them not even upright onto the shelf and walked further down the aisle knocking the promotion stand over fetching glass jars of jam with it.

The moment the jars hit the floor his supervisor was strait on his case and without five seconds had managed to get from one area to where the Star was quickly trying to hide the mess.

Laura was sat in her front room when the phone rang, she answered it and then without ten seconds put the phone down again; she had been told she could now meet with the prisoners in two hours.

She slammed the phone down and gathered her coat and jumped in her car excited like she was five and it was Christmas, she started the engine and reversed out of her drive.

Then driving down the road for just over fifteen minutes she arrived at the prison where she drove up to where the visitors enter and parked waiting for the time she'd been allocated.

She had probably got there a bit quickly as she now had to sit and wait in her car for an hour and a half but she didn't mind she just decided to read her book she brought.

When it was ten minutes from the time of the meeting she left her car and started walking into the building where she walked up to the man on the desk where she said she was for the meeting.

"Hello...yeah I'm here for to see five prisoners for this new program we're trialing, my name's..."

"Yes ok just wait there, have you brought your ID?"

"Yeah it's here"

She sat down on one of the vile green synthetic plasticity leather chairs and leaned back, something she rarely did.

Ten minutes later a man wearing a shirt and tie followed by a guard walked over to Laura and shook her hand, "I here you're looking forward to meeting our special selection of scum."

"Now I wouldn't call them that, I'm sure there's a few nutcases but I'm there's quite a few good men."

"Trust me, none of these men would be in here if they were good men. They're all worthless excuses for a body that breathes."

"You're nice"

"Well they're in here because they did deserve it for what they did, anyway can you follow this man and he will take you to see a room where you can talk to each of the five men."

The man in the smart shirt walked back the corridor he'd come from while the other man lead Laura down a different corridor and lead her into a room with thick plastic windows and sat her at a table in the middle of the room.

The other man then shut the door and walked away before returning five minutes later, "Ok here's the first man, you have as long as you need or two hours max." He then mumbled to himself, "hopefully it won't take that long for you figure out he'd an idiot."

The man was lead into the room and sat at the table, then the guard left the room, "I'll wait here, need anything or he starts playing up just give us a shout."

David had just got comfy on his impossibly annoying bed and had only read two paragraphs of the book he was reading when a man came to the door and unlocked it telling him to walk down the corridor leading him out.

“Some one’s here to see you”

For at least five seconds David was just confused and stared at the wall, completely baffled as to who would care enough to waste an hour to see him.

That’s all he saw it as now, not measured in usefulness or quality just how much time it would waste.

The man led David down the corridor and to where a man in a shirt and tie was standing. “David, I’ve heard some bad things about you, that’s why you’re here. I’ve also heard some deeper things about you and that’s why you are here in front of me. David, you know a few days ago you were told about a trial program...”

“Not interested”

“You didn’t let me finish”

“Didn’t need to because I knew what you were about to say was a load of crap anyway.”

“But this might be your chance to get back on the streets and live a normal life, come on it must be worth even trying.”

“No, I know you just want to screw it up, so I’ll stop before I start.”

“Now why the pessimism? Come on, anyway you have no choice and you’re not the only one either.”

Within the next few minutes another four men wearing prison clothes were escorted into a small room where they were told to sit and to make themselves comfy as they could be there for over an hour. Then each man was assigned a number not necessarily to order they came in and that would be the order they would have to go see the woman they all dreaded.

Then the first man was called through into a second room where a woman was sat waiting at a desk while the other men were not sure whether to laugh or cry.

Laura sat at the desk she’d been given when the first man through and sat down with her, he sat on the sat sideways and was completely oblivious to the fact Laura was there.

“Right, I’ll start by telling you who I am, a bit about myself, then you tell me something about you.”

“I don’t think so”

“What you mean?”

“I’m not here to have fun I’m here because if I don’t then I have to spend an extra three months in here, and I really don’t want that.”

“Well I’ll start...”

“Yeah, you do that, I’ll just sit here and ignore you.”

“Right...I’m Laura and I’m here to try and help you get back to your normal self and possible early rehabilitation, I do social work. Usually I work at AA meetings but today and hopefully for the next few weeks I will be working here and try to help you. Now let’s here something about you.”

“Listen Laura, I simply don’t give a...”

“Em hem”

“Ok, now I don’t care what you do and how much you want to help me...I don’t care, I’m happy here, you can’t rehabilitate me I will be back here in two weeks I bet yer.”

Already within two minutes Laura a normally patient woman was starting to dislike this man for his attitude and wasting her time, but she never turned down help for someone in need. She planned on asking the same question only this time use her tricks for making even the stubbornest of people talk normally and get somewhere.

“Ok then, before you came in here what did you like? What hobbies? Interests?”

“Well I liked to rob banks or if that was too much effort then just...”

“No...I mean anything legal like sports and fun?”

Laura didn’t mind what he said, just so long as he was answering her questions instead of just awkward.

“Well I used to play football but I bored of that and ended up...wait, you’re trying to catch me out here. You’re trying to trick me into talking, well it ain’t gonna happen! Ok I’m just going to sit here until you get bored of me.”

“I won’t get bored of you, can you tell me anything about life, you know any friends?”

“Cause I have friends you dumb...and I’m not telling you any more ok, I just said I’m staying quite so don’t tell me to tell you anything about me!”

By this point he was shouting and Laura wasn’t shouting over him to be heard she just sat there and smiled letting him shout at her.

“Finished?”

“No, I having finished, I just said, that’s it three months is worth not listening to you talking crap for a hour, I’m going.”

He got up to walk, “Guard! I’m done!” He walked through the door that the man waiting on the other side had just opened for him and led him back down the corridor. Laura lowered her head and sighed, “Some people just can’t don’t appreciate what they have.”

Five minutes later the man opened the door again and walked another man into the room. This time he wasn’t as big as the last man and looked quite innocent, but you could never tell.

He sat down like the first man had but he sat upright unlike the other man who slouched and wasn’t bothered about listening to a word she was saying.

As he sat down he even stretched his arm out and shook Laura’s hand but didn’t say his name instead just said hi instead.

“Hi, I’m Laura, I’m a social worker who will be helping you for the next few weeks, normally I help out at AA meetings but I thought I would try something a bit harder.”

“Well you come to the right place, there are plenty of people here who need help, though personally I think there are many more than need help more than me. Right anyway I’m Jack, I shouldn’t be here, but I’m sure you people here that one all the time.”

“Well at least I can say you’re more friendly than the last guy, can you tell me anything about yourself? Other than the I shouldn’t be here.”

The two of them talked for ten minute, Laura found he was a bit weird but he wanted to talk to her, yes he kept talking the pair of socks he likes with the cartoon on them or how his favourite tinned food is tuna but apart from that at least she could talk to him. They sat and talked but apart from the odd strange comment every now and then she was happy with the fact she had a chance of making progress, but when she asked him how she could help he acted differently.

He suddenly became confused and started looking around the room and Laura’s doubts returned, “What’s the problem?”

He started talking weirdly and made no sense, she wasn't sure whether it was something she'd said or he just didn't want to leave the prison.

She sat and waited for a response that was humanly understandable and at least partially relevant to the question but his gibberish kept coming, he then sat back in his chair and fell onto the floor tipping it over.

As he landed his head hit the floor and made a cracking sound, Laura shouted out to the man waiting bored outside as he came rushing in.

"He just...fell off his chair."

"Don't worry, he does this all the time, he just tries to get attention, pretends to be crazy hoping he'll be sectioned and allowed to be on his own."

"Well he seemed quite normal, but he also didn't seem like the sort who'd fake being crazy so he'd get out."

"He also doesn't seem the type who'd..."

"What?"

"But he did. Right I think you have enough time for one more today, still want?"

The man started to take the semi-conscious man out of the room and radioed for assistance from another guard, who then took him down the corridor.

For the first time in a long time in Laura's life she had to hesitate whether she wanted to help some one or not, normally she would help what ever the circumstances but this moment was new to her.

"Ok, I'll see if I can help this one"

The man sent the third man into the room and sat him on the chair, which was now stood back up.

Laura went through her introduction speech again and then asked the same question afterwards as she had the other two men.

"So can you tell me something about you now?"

The man snapped, "Well I'm David, I'm here because I...well did some bad things, well obviously otherwise I wouldn't be here."

"Any hobbies, interest? Legal ones?"

"Well I used to play games and that sort of stuff but for the last few years I haven't really done anything, no point really."

"Course there's a point."

"Like what? Like why am I here living this life of pointless misery?"

"Well you could always try being more optimistic, I mean your not the worse off, there are plenty more people who are more unlucky and unhappy than you."

"Yeah well, I haven't really cared about anything in a long while. How long is this going to take? I'm only doing this because they said if I don't then they'll ways to make it even worse for me."

"Well why not try and be more positive?"

"No point, already blown, the only thing I can control now is when I suffer, and I'm in no hurry for that."

The Star for the next five years went through tough times and they only got worse, eventually Mary, his counsellor helped him find a better more paid job after being repeatedly fired from job to job because he couldn't control his temper.

Though in the end she just gave up, she figured he wasn't getting anywhere, he would have good periods then bad periods, but could never control him to stop him from going back to his old tricks.

Over those years he had been repeatedly arrested and then bailed out by Mary or one of her colleagues he sometimes had when she was away, but now she had left.

He was on his own now and he couldn't cope.

He knew what he wanted to do but could never do it, everything got in his way and confused things for him even more than was necessary.

Just unsure he waited and waited hoping someone would one day help him and not make it worse.

He got up in the same miserable and sluggish way as he had for the best part of his life and got ready as if he was going somewhere but knew himself that would never happen.

He had been allowed to drive but how he passed his test with his aggression still puzzles even his closest of what he now called friends.

Every day he would go through the same routine and get ready for work where he now would have something challenging to do instead of just replacing baked beans and tinned peaches on shelves.

He would drive to work and after letting a few people have his fire he would park up and get out dragging himself through the main entrance still asking himself why bother.

"David right? Anyway can you tell me life was like before you came here?"

"Yeah David."

"And the main question?"

"Do I have to keep telling you my life story? I mean what is it you actually want from me?"

"Well yes if you want me to help you."

"I don't need help! What is it with you people? Assuming I need help! Just because I'm in here doesn't mean I need help!"

"Just trying to help"

"No you're not, you're just taking the piss, and mocking me, not surprising I hate psychologists."

"I'm not a psychologist, I'm just a social worker, I try to help people, I just thought maybe you might want another chance to live again."

"Well I blew that one a long time ago."

"What do you mean? There always time to try again."

"No, I blew it, you don't understand, there's nothing for me now."

"Why do you think that? Why is something bothering you?"

The Star attended work as normal and walked into his office, he was grouchy and would take any opportunity to snap the first person who spoke's head off.

Walking down the corridor past reception he had a storm following him and every time he made eye contact with someone the moment he had past them they would leave and walk the other way.

Entering his office which he shared the woman already in the room walked out and the Star sat at his desk where he turned on his computer.

He reached under his desk and switched the switch to boot his computer before then sitting back up and watching the monitor in front of him as it started, he then noticed someone had stuck a sticky note to his screen which he then peeled off and read. He read the note and as he did he face went from moody to pissed off to about to flip, the note was telling him he had to go see the boss, as his work from the last few days had not been up to standards. He stormed out of the office and ran up stairs where his boss's office was and entered without knocking.

"It was when I was younger I had problems. I started off being very patient not letting anything bother me, but one day I flipped and blew it."

"You keep saying you blew it, what do you mean?"

"I mean. I killed someone, I blew it, it's over, so I didn't see any point in dragging the burden of the effort required to let these pass me, instead I just found it easier to carry on sinning. Didn't see any point, I mean I've already ruined it, a few more sins isn't going to make it any worse."

"When did this happen?"

"It was when I was at school, I tried to fit in but they wouldn't have it, they used to call me the Star, don't know why they never told me, guess it had something to do with the fact my name was David."

"Oh, I see, so you wanted to keep clean, but then pressures built and you flipped, so you carried on being bad because you thought being good was just a waste of time."

"Yeah basically, I know where I'm going anyway so what use is being good now?"

"Well there is such thing as forgiveness you know."

"What's that?"

"Never read the bible? It says that it doesn't matter what we do, as long as we are willing to forgive and accept we did wrong then there's no reason why we can't be forgiven."

"Really? Yeah but what I did, nobody would forgive me, there's no chance, I just want to sleep when I think about it, I try to keep positive thoughts, but they never last longer than an hour then they slide into negatives again."

"Well think about the positives, and then try to not think about the bad things. I mean you can still be how you were when you were younger. I mean forgive those who did bad against you and then ask for forgiveness and start afresh."

"But I can't forgive them stupid useless pricks, not after what they did to me."

"Just take it easy, it's all about the will to forgive. See you tomorrow my time's up."

That night David had a lot to think about he also had a lot to look forward to, for the first time in a long time David was happy about himself and actually fell to sleep within a few minutes of lying down. Instead of what his usual sleep patterns to lie awake thinking about himself and what he thought he was in for.

Never sure whether to trust people he met he made an exception for Laura who he now actually couldn't wait to see her again and find out how his story ends, but he knew first he had to sleep. Of which he dreamt normal dreams instead of his usual nightmares.

For the whole of that night he slept, something which surprised even himself and his cellmate, he just slept instead of talking to himself and rolling about distressed, eventually waking feeling fresh and happy for once.

He awoke this happy very rarely, or even not at all, even before the incident he wasn't this happy, even the guards when they went to let them out for the morning weren't expecting to see him smile.

How went the whole of that day happy even when he would normally want to fight he just let it by, just as once did, and he felt a lot better for it, he suddenly found a purpose in his life. He realised the uselessness of pessimism, it only makes you unnecessarily depressed which takes the point out of life, not sure what time he would see Laura again he spent his whole day anticipating her arrival, but she never came.

The next day he was still happy and spent the whole of that day waiting for her to turn up so he could finish talking about things and best of all not the getting out part but having someone to talk to. Someone who didn't automatically assume he was crazy, or was just cold hearted, yes he hadn't thought about a single good thought in over five years but he did still have the will to be back to the way he once was.

He just didn't realise that even though he had sinned that he could still do that, he had assumed it was all over, but Laura, someone he could safely say was now a friend had shown him a new way and that it didn't have to be over.

All it takes is the will to forgive.

Eventually David started to doubt whether Laura would ever turn up again and just as he was about to give up and go back to sleep the man came into his cell and told him to follow him, fearing the worse he dragged himself after him down the corridor.

When he got in sight of the end of the corridor he saw a man sat in a chair and David was instructed to sit in the chair opposite him, "David, you have a visitor."

"Really?"

"Yeah"

He led David down another corridor into a room where a woman he knew only too well was sat at a desk.

"Laura, I've been thinking and..."

"Don't worry, I've come to finish our talk. Had any thoughts?"

"Yeah, I've been happy all week, I've never felt this alive, well for years."

"Good, I like to see I'm helping, anything else you'd like to ask?"

"Yeah, I feel better now, I don't think I'd ever want to do anything like that again, all that other stuff I did I decided to accept was my fault and I forgave most of the people who did this to me."

"You want to go back on the streets don't you?"

"Well it would be nice, but I'm not fussed, as long as I'm..."

"No need to accept this place, you can be free, I've already granted permission for you to be released under my supervision."

"Ok what do I do?"

"Just don't do anything stupid, if you do you'll end up straight back in here and for even longer, that includes trying to run away."

"I'm not sure if you can trust me, I mean..."

"Doesn't matter, anyway I've already got permission and signed the form so you're going, you just need to sign this and you're with me."

Not sure which was better for him, being in prison for at least ten years or being free only to follow Laura around for at least a few months he hesitated to sign the paper.

Holding the pen he'd been given above the paper he moved it over the signature line and pressed down on the paper before lifting it back off again, he hadn't been this

unsure about something he knew he wanted for a while and wasn't sure why he didn't just sign it.

In the end he signed the piece of paper and handed it back to Laura who then picked up her briefcase she carried everywhere and handed it to the man outside, he read it and then filed it in his folder.

“Ok David, you can go, just make sure you do what Laura says and if you try anything funny then you'll know where you'll end up, back here. So good luck and hope not to have to see you again.”

David left the room and was now confused, he had entered the prison having been told he must spend a minimum of ten years there and was now being released after only a few months. He was confused because he felt there must be a catch, something seemed too good to be true, but he wasn't complaining and followed Laura where he was then handed his possessions and clothes back.

He then entered a separate room where he changed into his street clothes before walking outside as a free man.

The first thing he did when he stepped outside was breathe the air, everything taste nicer, even the prison food when you're happy and even better when you are free. Laura started walking down the road and David had to follow her so he caught up with her and started talking about things in general, David never talked generally always specifically and he for once started the conversation.

They walked down the road until it ended and the town started, they walked into the town and walked down the high street, a place David had refused to set foot, since he was younger.

They carried on talking and entered a café where they sat and talked eating real food and David managed to keep calm even when the waiter kept getting the wrong order. After talking together David wanted to keep talking, he didn't necessarily like her in that way but she was the only person he had known who would talk to him about private matters.

But when she said it was strictly professional he could see that she meant a bit more than that.

For the rest of the afternoon they spent time together, David couldn't admit that he liked her even by the smallest amount and she kept saying it was professional even when David made no suggestion it was otherwise.

David was allowed to go home after Laura decided he was ready and she was just about to let him go when an old woman walked past and dropped her purse, David instantly picked it up. “David, don't!”

“Don't what?”

He walked over to the woman and gave her the purse, “You dropped this.”

Laura sighed and David returned home, he knew he had to report twice a week to the local police station but that didn't bother him.

David knew the way home as he'd walked this road many times, he started walking and just as he predicted the dark sky overhead began to empty its contents and David didn't mind getting wet.

He didn't see the rain as a bad thing this time; instead he saw it as washing away his sins and starting a new life, a new beginning.

He walked down the road and as quickly as the rain had started it had stopped and it only took minutes before the ground started to dry and the cloud disappear into his imagination. It only took him ten minutes to walk home but he made it last half an hour, walking as slow as he could he savoured every last second until he had no

choice but to open his front door and enter the place that reminded him only of misery.

Only this time he could feel the breeze coming through the window and appreciate it instead of shutting himself off and being the misery that consumed him, this time though he could be free from himself.

He sat in his favourite chair still dripping wet and leaned back resting his head against the cushion which he hadn't noticed before, he knew it was there but never really paid much attention to much, other than himself.

But now he was no longer selfish and no longer needed to sin to keep himself able to live, now he would take each day at a time, and think without just taking it for granted.

He felt it a shame that he couldn't finish telling Laura his story, but he wasn't bothered by that he just kept telling himself what Laura had said and it made him think differently. He felt she'd saved his life; he would still be alive if he hadn't met her but for a point where he may as well not be, she'd saved him from himself and gave him the chance to live as himself again. He wanted to tell her that but he couldn't, instead he just kept it to himself and just thought about his future, this time in a positive mind with the will to actually achieve.

He knew it would take a while to make a full recovery both of physical health and mental health and it would take a lot longer to heal the wounds of mistrust from the people he regrets he hurt.

He wanted to buy the book that he had been given in the prison, the one that allowed him to become himself again, even if it was only for the ten minutes that he read it for a time but to him it meant a lot. In the end he decided he wouldn't buy it, it reminded him too much of bad times and also he didn't think the book shop would have forgiven him yet for what he did last time.

He had forgiven most of the people who had ruined David, all except two which would come in time, he then asked that he would be forgiven.

Instead he just sat back in his chair and sat there thinking about what Laura had said, how everything is better when you look at it from the positive side, and how it's all about the will to forgive.

Then he lay back and did what he did best. Slept.