

“A strong sense of identity depends on belonging to community as well as family.”

Alone

By five in the morning, many hours into the labour, the doctors decided on an emergency caesarean. The woman, crushing her husband's hand, gave a shaky sigh of relief at the thought of the pain finally ending. She was rushed to the operating theatre, without so much as a second thought. The baby, a baby boy they had been informed enthusiastically by the midwife, was healthy. He had his mother's eyes and his father's nose. A pudgy body. Wispy red hair adorned his head, like a crown. Their beautiful baby boy, placed to the side now, to make way for the friends, family and other visitors. Congratulations, congratulations. He was all alone.

By three and half he was walking, talking and playing in the dirt. Or, at least, that's what he wished he was doing. There was plenty of dirt around. But alas, the boy was stuck in the house with nothing to do. All his toys were boring, too safe, with their round edges and 'child friendly' content. The cat, a fat, pampered old thing, was not an option to the boy. That animal had a temper. Dad was away at work, earning a living and clawing his way to the top job. Mum was in the kitchen cooking, cleaning and doing whatever else mums did. The boy had nothing to do, no one to talk to. He was all alone.

By five he was starting school. His first year! His first day! Excitement bubbled in him, building up until he felt he would burst like a balloon. His mum, holding his hand, walked him to the class room. His dad, nowhere to be seen, was at work again. As usual. The classroom was large and full of children. The boy had no idea so many children could even exist, having spent a majority of his life at home with his mum. The excitement disappeared as quickly as it had come. It was replaced by anxiety. He didn't want his mum to leave him here with all these strangers. In the unknown. She kissed his forehead, told him she'd be back at three thirty and left. He was all alone.

By 11 he was in grade 5. Nearly there, at the top. One more year and he would be at the top of the school. Just like the way Dad had climbed to the top at work. The boy felt a swell of pride deep within his chest. It wasn't like he saw his dad much, but his mum was proud of him. She would compliment him on his good marks, on his work. The boy worked hard to earn the attention and affection. It didn't come free. Nothing in this world is free. Without the love and affection he had nothing. He was all alone.

By twelve he had just finished primary school. Scrabbled his way to the top of the pecking order, only to be thrust into high school. Back to the bottom. This time, on his first day, his mother drove him to the front gates of the school. 'I'll pick you up at three,' was all she said. The boy got out of the car and before he could even wave goodbye, she was gone. With one last look at the empty parking space his mother's car had occupied only moments ago, he turned towards the school. It was bigger than primary school, with more people than ever before. With a deep breath he stepped towards the next six years of his life. He was all alone.

By sixteen he had a choice. What subjects would he choose? So much choice. So many decisions. What to do, what to do. The boy wanted to continue with his art and design. To be an architect was his goal. No, no. Mother wanted him to study maths and science. He could work on ground breaking research! Be on the news! No, no. Father wanted him to study law and business. He could follow in his father's footsteps! He could be rich! Art and design it was. It was his life after all. Right? No support from his parents. He was all alone.

By eighteen he had had enough. The straw had finally broken the camel's back. His mother no longer complimented his grades, his work. No matter how high they were or how well it was done. His father, still nowhere to be seen, was at work again. Typical. No one paid him attention. No one gave him affection. No one gave him the time of day. If couldn't get what he wanted by being good, he would be bad. He would not be alone anymore.

It hadn't gone down as well as he'd hoped. But still, this ought to stir a reaction out of the cold statues he called parents. His best blue shirt was torn and his hands were cuffed behind him. Yes, he had done it. He had robbed a petrol station. He had threatened the poor girl behind the register. With a knife. "Oh ho". He had taken the money too. Not that he needed it anyway. His family had plenty of money. He had done it for the attention. His family lacked the ability to give him the affection he so desired. He had been driven to do it. He had needed to do it. His parents were angry when they came to the station. Maybe angry wasn't the right word. Furious. They were furious. They had yelled and screamed. Thrown a tantrum, like the many he had thrown as a kid. The boy sat back and smiled serenely. He had done it. Joshua Kennet had finally gotten the attention he wanted. He was no longer alone.

Explanatory statement

In response to the prompt "A strong sense of identity depends on belonging to community as well as family" I have written an imaginary piece in the form of a narrative. The prompt states that in order for an individual to have a strong sense of identity they must belong to both community and family. Without belonging to these groups, the individual's sense of identity would be diminished.

My piece of writing focus's a boy who does not feel that he belongs in his family. This idea is presented to the audience through a variety of language choices.

I have used alliteration in the third paragraph. The repetition of the 'bu' and 'ba' sounds in the sentence "excitement bubbled up in him, building up until he felt he would burst like a balloon" grabs the audience's attention and helps to keep them interested. It also highlights the way children should feel on their first day of school as it is a significant point in their lives.

At the ending of every sentence, save the last two, I have repeated the phrase "he was all alone". I repeated this short sentence to reinforce the idea that this boy was all alone and did not belong. In the final two paragraphs I changed the sentence slightly to be "he would no longer be alone" and "he was no longer alone" to show the change in the way the boy felt about his situation after he had robbed the petrol station for attention.

The use of a cliché in the second last paragraph allows for the audience to relate to the character through familiarity. By stating that "the straw had finally broken the camel's back" I indicated to the audience that they boy has finally had enough and allow the audience to sympathise with him. In the second paragraph I used the subordinate clause "too safe" to describe the boy's toys...

My piece responds to the prompt through the main character's reactions to the situations he is placed in and through his name. I explored the idea that belonging to family has close links to an individual's identity through my repetition of the short sentence "he was all alone". By repeating this I reinforce that the boy is alone at some of the most important times in his development from a child to an adult. The effects of not belonging to a family unit are explored using the metaphor that a person's name summarises their identity. It is implied that the main character has no identity of their own through the lack of a name or title. Throughout the entire story the main character is only known as "the boy". Without a name or title the audience is distanced from the character. In the

second last sentence, however, he is given the name "Joshua Kennet". This only happens after he had gain the attention he need from his parents and felt that his own situation had changed. By having his name revealed, the audience is given the opportunity to sympathise with the character and the boy gains an identity.

My narrative draws on the poems "The boy" and "Enter without so much as knocking" by Bruce Dawe. I have structured my piece in a similar way to Dawe's "Enter without so much as knocking". I look at the different stages in the boy's life and the way he reacts and feels about what is going on around him. My narrative centres around the red headed boy from Dawe's poem "The boy".

I wrote this piece for new parents or people considering starting a family. The narrative is intended to inform parents of the dangers of ignoring their children. The story helps to reinforce the thought that children require love and attention from their parents in order to properly develop their own sense of identity.

I wrote this narrative to explore how much of our identity depends on belonging to a family unit, especially when we are younger. The idea of needing to belong to a family to have a strong sense of identity is expressed through the boy's lack of a name throughout the story.

I have chosen to use fairly simple words in my narrative because it better represents that this is how a child would have seen things. It was also to convey to the audience that this is not something that needs to be complicated. If you could give your child half an hours of attention each day these sorts of issue could possibly be avoided.