

Day 2

A Childhood Memory

I awoke and realized I had fallen asleep during the journey. It was already dark. I drowsily looked around the car. Dad was not in the driver's seat and Mom was not in the front passenger seat.

We must have arrived.

I looked to my left and saw Jonas sound asleep. I crawled towards him slowly as much as my little toddler hands and feet could. I shook him.

"Big brother, wake up! Daddy and Mama are gone."

He awoke a little grouchy and he looked around.

"They must have gone ahead to Grandpa and Grandma's house," he said. "Let's go find them."

We stepped out of the car. I drew my leather jacket shut to shield myself from the cold, dark night. There was a gathering of people in front of the car. It looked like a party. I looked around and the area was unfamiliar.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"They must have parked a way off from Grandpa and Grandma's house. See? This street is the street that leads to the house." Jonas pointed in the other direction, where it looked dark and empty.

The size of the street was starting to look familiar. If we walked further, we would reach the right turn to the main street – so the path to Grandpa and Grandma's house should be on the left

side of the street.

I hesitated after looking down that dark and empty path. It seemed misty to my little mind with a wild imagination.

I did not dare walk towards the darkness. But at that moment, I felt something warm in my hand.

"Let's go."

I looked up. My brother was holding my hand. He smiled and I felt safe. Together we walked down that dark street – just the two of us, with only our leather jackets to protect us from the cold.

As we walked, the mist seemed to clear away just as darkness runs away from light. We were reaching the right turn, which meant the left pathway would soon be there. I had the image in my mind – a big path on the left but before that is the small path leading to the house. We would soon

be there, nice and warm and safe.

The street started to turn to the right. We were almost there. To my horror, there was no large path to the left nor was there a small path. A big brick wall curved the street leading to the main street to the right.

We were lost.

I would have cried right there and then. But a hand was holding mine.

"Let's go back to the car."

I nodded. Teary-eyed, I walked on with my brother. As we were walking back, he noticed an entry way to the left. It led to the main street.

"It's the church!" He exclaimed.

The church! We always passed by it when going to our grandparents' house. From the church

we would know the way. We walked towards it but the main street was busy with activity. Cars were zooming past.

Two little boys would not be able to cross safely. My brother saw two ladies who looked like they were going to cross. He casually approached them and with his innate charm, he asked whether they could help two cute little boys cross the street.

As we crossed, a man came from the other side and saw us.

"There you are! Your parents have been looking for you."

The man thanked the ladies and he brought us back to where the car was parked. In front of it was a party. There were so many people there. The party extended into the street.

We were soon led to our parents. I was so relieved as they hugged us both.

I glanced at my brother and he glanced back with a smile.

I looked up at my parents. "Can we go home now?" I asked.

STUDY GUIDE

Childhood Memory

1. Why was the writer afraid? What exactly was he afraid of from the beginning of the story up to the climax?
2. How would you describe his brother, Jonas? What kind of character do you think he possesses as implied in this particular story?
3. The author described the street quite in detail. What do you think was he trying to convey to his readers?
4. Describe the author as a boy based on the specifics of his memorable incident in his very life.

Picket Fence: A Personal Journey

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5. Why is this event so vivid in the mind of the writer? Feel free to speculate beyond what is already obvious.
6. If you are a literary writer or critic, what can you say about the style, the flow, and the plot of the story? If you are not, either try to reflect or discuss this question.
7. Describe the author's relationship with his parents. Feel free to expound on the implied proximity or distance of such relationship.
8. What do you think is the main theme of the story inside this essay?
9. As a reader, what can you say about this short essay?
10. Is there a moral in the essay? If so, what is it?