

Greetings,

So, you may have been wondering what all this business about "Helping my novel save the world" is and why I have decided to let the public read my work for free.

I wrote this novel with the intention of encouraging readers to help the people who suffer in Uganda, Africa. It is my goal to make readers feel a desire to donate to the World Vision Organization while being entertained by my work along the way even though the plot has nothing to do with the country itself. If you would please, donations can be made via the World Vision Website, www.worldvision.org/

Whether or not you choose to donate will never change the fact that my novel will always be free for the public to enjoy. Though the novel is 100% copyrighted to me, I give permission for anyone to link to my blog, download and store my PDF files for as long as they wish, and to cite my work for educational purposes under the condition that they do not modify any of my files in any way.

Nevertheless, I hope that you enjoy my work and will return to my website to read more chapters. If you really like my book, then why not pass it on to a couple of your friends? On the contrary, if you don't like my style, pass my website on to some people who you don't like so that they will waste their time. Either way, several years of my life have gone into this novel and I hope that people in Africa will ultimately benefit from it.

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Chapter 10 TO CPsbae

A long time later, I woke up inside of a hospital bed. I felt fine as I let myself sense each part of my body from head to toe. Strangely, I felt no pain in myself. Even my bullet wound didn't hurt at all. I felt completely numb.

"Must be a bunch of morphine," I muttered to the empty room around me. I decided to get out of my bed, but then I remembered my feet. I sat up and then moved the blankets off of them. As I examined my walkers, I realized that they were not in as bad a condition as I had initially thought that they were. The burns were only second degree, not third, and the rubber of my shoes was not fused to my soles. I knew that I could probably walk around if I wanted to.

I tried and succeeded. I felt no pain as I paced around my room. I glanced to my left and saw that my clothes were piled up in a corner, so I went over to them and reached into my back pocket to get my wallet. Upon inspection, my credit cards were out of order, so I knew that somebody had been snooping around inside of my wallet for an ID card. Without a doubt, the people at the hospital knew that I was an illegal immigrant. But the fact that I would have to be deported someplace was the least of my concerns; the picture of me and Skye together was the object of my attention. Thankfully, it was still intact and only slightly

wrinkled.

“Enough is enough,” I said. “It's time for me to get back to her.”

From there, I vowed that the thief part of me was over with. It was causing me more trouble than the adrenaline prize was worth and had almost killed me. You might even say that Hyde one's bullet had killed my monster half. I knew that Skye was more important to me than my adrenaline rushes and that she was the most valuable thing in my life, so returning to her became my top priority. I would simply just have to escape the hospital to avoid getting questioned and deported out of the United States. So I changed out of my hospital clothes and back into the dirty outfit that I was more familiar with. I took a pen and a post-it note out of the desk next to my bed and hastily scribbled the words “Thank you” on it. I left the note on my pillow and then exited my room.

As I snuck down the hallways of the hospital, I avoided making eye contact with anybody who I happened to encounter. Luckily, nobody questioned me as I briskly walked out of the lobby. All in all, I made a clean escape. Once I was back outside, I wandered around the unfamiliar city until I could find a bank. When I found a bank, I used an ATM machine to acquire some cash. With the cash, I took a taxi to the subway station and then rode the subway back to Warknew. The ride was long and uneventful.

When I finally got back to Warknew, I instantly ran straight to Skye's house. I knocked on her door and then wondered how surprised she would be to see me back in town again. I waited for about twenty seconds and then knocked again. She didn't answer her door.

“It must be because of one of two reasons,” I said. “She either isn't home right now or

she is mad at me for leaving her.”

Skye had every right to be mad at me though. After all, I had left without even saying a word to her. All that I had done was leave her that stupid, ugly, scribbled note on a piece of wrinkled binder paper. Truly, it was not what she deserved; she deserved at least a face-to-face conversation. Maybe she even deserved more. Maybe it was all an insult for me to just get up and leave her. Even if she did understand why I had to do what I did, it's possible that what I did wasn't right in the first place.

I knew that if I talked to Rohoss that I could probably find out why Skye wasn't answering her door. Without a doubt, Skye would have talked to Rohoss about where I had gone. It made sense, so Rohoss would know if Skye was mad at me or not. Therefore, I went to Ci Niao, wondering if Rohoss would be working there during the afternoon shift like he usually did. When I got to the liquor store however, instead of finding Rohoss, I found Farley. Surprisingly, he looked very happy to see me; it was exactly the opposite of what I had been expecting.

“It's about time that you came back. How have you been, Smiley?”

I gave him an odd look. “I'm still alive. How's the liquor store?”

“Different now,” my ex-boss told me. “Everything here has been the pits since you left.”

“It has?”

“Rohoss has gone over the deep end. He's taken a liking to drugs and other bad habits.”

“Seriously?” I exclaimed. Everything felt like a dream, a bad, bad dream. “Is he still working here?”

Farley nodded. “He's still employed, but he doesn't work much. He just does his drugs and smokes all day. He probably doesn't even know that he's at work because he's so messed up.”

I gave my ex-boss a frown. “What is he smoking?”

“Anything and everything,” Farley said. “He'd smoke hundred dollar bills if he had any. Every last bit of his paycheck goes toward something that his body doesn't need. He's even lost his apartment because he didn't pay his rent.”

“That's so sad,” I said. Why was Warknew so much different?

Farley sighed. “Yeah, it sucks. I'd fire him, but I pity him too much. If I did that or told him that he couldn't sleep in the stock room at night, then he'd probably try to rob a bank or something. He's screwed his whole life over in only a month.”

“Is he here right now though?” I inquired.

“Yeah,” Farley said. “He's back in the stock room.”

And that is where I went. When I first saw Rohoss for the first time again, I could barely recognize him. He'd lost almost all of his body weight. The skeleton of my old friend looked at me.

“Hey there, old bud,” he said. “Long time no see. I thought that you got kidnapped or something.”

His bloodshot eyes made me wonder exactly how much and how many different kinds

of drugs he had been doing. I found it hard not to stare at what he had become.

"Well..." I muttered. "I'm here now. What have you been up to?"

"Nothing much," Rohoss said. "I'm out of high school now." I knew that he hadn't graduated. He'd either dropped or flunked out.

"Great, what else?"

"Well, since you left, I found some new friends. We go paint balling all the time."

Paint balling and drugging...

"Cool," I said, somewhat irritated. It was time to stop beating around the bush. "So, have you seen Skye lately? I've been looking for her. She's not mad at me for leaving her, is she?"

"Well... Uh..." Rohoss stuttered. "She wasn't mad..."

"Do you know where she is?"

"Uh..." Rohoss balked.

"Stop stuttering," I said. "You lied to me, did you? She's pissed at me, isn't she?"

"I wasn't lying!" Rohoss retorted. "It's just that... I don't want to... She's... Skye's dead, man. She crashed her car about a week ago and died. A motorcycle clipped her rear left side and she lost control and sent herself into a sixteen wheeler. The truck rolled over onto her car and... It was really bad, man... all over the newspapers..."

"What?" I stuttered, holding back tears. My mouth felt dry as if my eyelids had sucked all of the moisture out of it.

"I'm sorry, man. That's just what happened. There was nothing that you could have

done.”

And from there, I left Ci Niao, because there was everything that I could have done.