

Passionate Manhood Part 4

Session 2 Stories

By Arthur Burk

Story 1: The Cult

Pete was a second born Mercy, born into a macho, survivalist cult. He was taught that he was a cut above women and that he did not need any emotional or physical solace. He was to be tough.

Toughness training began at two, with mandatory wrestling with bigger kids, combined with vicious mocking for all failure. Farm work began at three, caring for animals much bigger than he was. When someone noticed that he made friends with one of the hens, that bird became lunch, and the community mocked him while he ate his friend.

By age four he was compelled to help butcher animals, and by age five, was forced to begin hunting game. Eventually, he had to hunt alone, and stay out for days until he brought back enough game.

The religious exercises were long and tedious, but only required memorization of proclamations for endless ceremonies. He could block the nonsense while executing it well, before he was ten.

Pete had visual discernment and had seen different kinds of demons and structures since he was a little kid. He also had enough sense to keep his mouth shut about such stuff.

As soon as he was old enough to hunt on his own, he had been drawn to the north side of the sprawling ranch. He didn't know it was because of discernment of land. One afternoon he had settled into his favorite natural blind, watching the game trail, when he fell into a trance.

An angel appeared to him and told him that the True God was watching him, and had plans for his life.

Being seen was special, but it didn't change the daily dynamics of the cult with the pressure to craft new ways to be predatory, as a means of proving his manhood and his worth to the "god" of the cult.

It was customary for men to ambush the older boys in the cult and fight them to teach them manhood. After that angelic visit, Pete found some rage in him, he did not know was



there. He and others were shocked the first time he decked a middle-aged man who outweighed him by 75 pounds.

He gained respect in the cult, while internally hating the person he was forced to become. No expression of his design was possible because of the lack of privacy and culture of suspicion.

In that ache, the angel came to him again, in his sleep, and showed him a map of the leylines on the compound. He had no idea what they were, but got the sense he was supposed to identify them and just walk on them. So, he surreptitiously planned his firewood assignments, hunting trips and other activities to explore each section of the land and find these lines.

As he found and walked them, he felt more alive than any other time. The cult leader knew that although he was utterly compliant outwardly, he had tapped into a different energy source.

Story 2: The Mean Family

Jeanie's dad was an angry alcoholic. Jeanie's mom was a ferocious blamer. Her older brother was a bully and a mean tease. By age two, Jeanie had a pretty good handle on the mantle of invisibility, and lived in a hyper-alert mode, when at home.

Predictably, her immune system took a hit from constant stress, and she picked up stray germs altogether too often.

The first time she got a cold at school and brought it home to mother, the towering rage was horrific. She learned that when she was sick, she would be shunned and should crawl in a hole until well.

She learned to play the sickness card to get out of school, until her mom caught her doing that and introduced her to a different flavor of rage. From then on, she went to school sick, with a fever, in the winter, because mother was a terror.

In gym class one year, when she was changing clothes, the gym teacher noticed the welts on the back of her legs and called CPS. Jeanie lied passionately and unconvincingly. Parents were brought in and corroborated her story that something must have happened at school, because **nothing** could have happened in their sweet, loving home.

Inexplicably, CPS sent her back home with her parents. They knew beating her was no longer a viable option, so they explored every imaginary tool for emotional torment, for her "betrayal" of the family.



The door was removed from her room. She was no longer allowed to hide there. She had to serve the family's tiniest wish, and be seen by some family member every moment she was in the house.

The gym teacher was no fool. She worked ever so delicately to build a tiny bridge of trust to Jeanie, while she watched and waited. Eventually she noticed that Jeanie was not brushing her hair. She probed. Parents had figured out that blows to the head were not as visible as a belt to the legs. THIS time the gym teacher was successful at getting her permanently removed from the home and placed in foster care.

The new family was well meaning and clueless. Too much love bombing. They could not comprehend how shocking it was to Jeanie to shower every day, wear a different set of clean clothes every day, and have a choice of different styles of jackets to choose from. It was overwhelming.

The first time Jeanie was sick and the foster mom came into her room with a bowl of chicken soup, Jeanie almost screamed in fear from the old files. The foster mom was so confused.

The gym teacher watched, waited and nailed the timing. She called the foster mom, said she would bring Jeanie home, then asked Jeanie to drop by the office after hours. She asked a couple of questions, then held the little girl while she sobbed out 15 years of blocked anguish.

Story 3: Not Belonging

Rasheed was Bangladeshi, Mayan and Scottish. He was raised in a Southern Redneck culture where he fit like a lobster in an aviary.

He learned disdain and rejection early on, and reciprocated with hate and hard fists.

School sided with the perps and he was labeled a troublemaker because he could not refrain from responding when he was skillfully baited by the White bullies.

He soon learned that his grace in motion was a marketable commodity on the sports field where he could dominate the Rednecks. This created a complex dynamic. He was a valuable commodity for team sports and a despised non-human the rest of the time.

THIS cut deeply, because the Bangladeshi are community oriented and understand themselves through their position in the community, rather than through individual achievements or identity. Being deeply valued and then deeply devalued by the sports-crazed Southern Redneck racist culture was crazy making.



From the Mayan side he had an intuitive skill for math which earned him kudos from his high school teachers and disdain from the Rednecks who value coon dogs and moonshine more than finding the factors of a quadratic equation.

The Scottish blood in him knew how to compete in the face of broad social injustice.

So Rasheed became more and more of an athlete and math geek, and less and less of a person. The shell around his feelings hardened as did his fists. He had no friends, but no one wanted to define themselves as his enemy.

The career adviser at the high school was a subtle obstacle, since her son was in the running for some of the same scholarships he needed.

The math teacher stepped in and coached him on how to get a sport scholarship to a school that had a decent engineering program.

He arrived at the East Coast campus and discovered that the Southern Rednecks were amateurs at racism compared to the Descended-from-The-Mayflower crowd.

But he knew this game. He hardened his resolve and settled in to compete with brain and brawn for a place as a commodity in the university culture.

Story 4: A Broken Beginning

His mom was homeless. His dad was unknown. At birth he was plugged into the foster care system.

He learned to be self-contained: connected to no one and nothing. A rambling man.

In the foster care homes, he was broadly compliant, but showed no initiative or emotions.

At school he worked just a bit to be invisible. Grades were good enough to avoid attention.

In one home, there was a guitar, and enough breadth of mind that he was given permission to plink.

He learned to play by ear, and eventually began to compose, still by ear.

The school sought to plug him into lessons and for the first time in his life, he fought back.

He had found a piece of himself, and refused to let the system fix it/him.



In high school, Freddie found a friend. Equally silent and withdrawn. And therefore safe.

Jeff had damaged hands and would never play, but he had music in his soul. In time, he began to craft some lyrics for Freddie's chords and cadences.

Jeff earned the right to prompt Freddie to get on YouTube and learn some additional guitar techniques. The two privately expanded their small repertory of songs and their skill.

They stayed out of trouble. Their families ignored them, glad each problem child finally had a friend.

The system pressured Freddie to get a job. He ended up at McDonald's. The front counter was a horror. Too many people, too many choices. Fortunately, the manager moved him to the kitchen, where he didn't have to be human, and was able to switch off, numb out, and make burgers.

He bought a better guitar, then saved the rest of his income in a sock. He had no skills at planning; little awareness of the culture or the future.

He tuned out anyone trying to intrude on his safe, one-friend world of music. The world was just an inconvenience to be endured and tuned out.

Then he was graduated from high school, and aged out of the foster care system with his guitar, his songs, his money sock and his friend, Jeff.

Story 5: The Broken Body

Vicki was made to soar, but her body had congenital issues that grounded her. In the first ten years, she had five surgeries which eventually ended the pain every time she moved, but left her with hugely limited ability to move.

During one of her physical therapy sessions, in a pool, she found out that something happened inside her when she was in and under water.

She had no idea that it was her spirit coming alive, because she was a water baby. She just knew that in a world that was defined by "can't," water drew her.

The community pool was available but it took a lot of effort to get her there, to clear a space in the shallow end of the pool, and to get her out of the wheel chair, into the water.

Her family was willing, but had poor time management skills, so she only got there half a dozen times a year.



Most of the year, she was a burden to others, and her body was a savage limitation to her soul which had an active imagination.

She began to draw and quickly gravitated to seascapes and giant storms. Other than a dozen-colored pencils, no one invested in her quirky hobby, but she invested the time.

In high school, one of the yearbook editors asked her to draw a single picture. Then another, and another. The faculty adviser saw the talent, drew in the art teacher to coach her. Suddenly she had access to a lot of supplies – and a constant war.

The teacher wanted her to learn the basics and build the foundation for great art. Vicki wanted to express what her spirit felt, even though she knew nothing about her spirit or being a water baby. They bickered endlessly, but Vicki knew she had to humor the teacher to have access to the supplies, so she bent to the demands for odious exercises.

But at home, she self-medicated with the ocean scenes she loved, and hid them from the teacher since she hated having them critiqued.

Her family moved on with life, since the other kids were blossoming, and they were thrilled to not have so much time robbed by the medical issues.

Vicki wore out YouTube, studying every video of storms, seeking to find that ONE visual image that expressed what she knew was inside her. She saw, modified, drew, failed and went back again to a different ocean scene, knowing that she just HAD to draw one picture, someday, somehow, somewhere and each failure brought her closer to capturing the immensity in her.

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February 2024

