Dannyboy

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Daniel ran through the backyard as fast as he could, his eyes constantly scanning the terrain for pitfalls and enemy attackers. He spotted movement by the old willow tree at the side of the house and quickly dove behind the woodpile. He slid a little ways on his stomach and then made his way to his feet. He moved carefully, but quickly towards the other end of the woodpile. He had to stay in a crouch, though, because the stacked logs were not high enough to cover him from enemy attackers."

Cover Page Footnote

This prose is available in The Angle: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1992/iss1/36
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Once he had waddled safely to the end of the pile, Daniel peered across to the willow. He saw nothing. His eyes then slowly surveyed everything in the yard, but he still saw nothing. “What the hell,” he thought, as his heart started to pound. “Where is he?” was his next thought—one that he didn’t get to finish because of an almost undetectable noise that came from behind him. It sounded like a twig being broken by the foot of a lurking bandit, but he wasn’t sure. His heart began to race. With a hard-to-swallow gulp of confidence, he hurried around to confront the noise from behind and saw Brian Kodowski, long time arch-enemy and faithful best friend, squeeze three shots off from his revolver. “Bang! Bang! Bang!” he yelled confidently as he shook his finger at Daniel.

“You’re dead, Dannyboy, I gotcha!”

“Yeah, yeah, I know.”

“Yeah, yeah, my butt! Start counting to ten, cause youuuu’re dead.”

“Wait, Brian, I’ve got an idea.”

Brian looked at Daniel suspiciously, thinking that he was trying to get out of being dead. Daniel noticed the look, ‘cause he had seen it on Brian’s face many times before. He ignored it and kept on talking.

“I’m sick of playing guns with our fingers. Let’s go get our cap guns.”

“I thought your mom took yours away?”

“She did, but I know where she put it.”

Brian paused for a second and then agreed, “Good idea, go get it and meet me back here in five minutes.”

They concluded with their secret handshake and Daniel was off.

Daniel flew into his driveway and was off his bike before it had stopped moving. He bolted into the house, but slowed when he reached the kitchen. He quickly glanced around the room. “Good,” he thought, his mother was nowhere to be found. He still didn’t know where she was, though, and had to be careful because a confrontation right now would be bad, seeing that he hadn’t cleaned his room before he left the house this morning. If he was spotted now, he wouldn’t see daylight for a week. So Daniel took a deep breath and raced to his parents’ bedroom. “Ok,” he thought, “Where did she put it?” He opened up her top dresser drawer. Nothing there but ladies underwear and his sling-shot. Then he checked his father’s dresser. Still nothing. Next, their night stands. Mother’s? “Yeah, right!” He thought, “If I don’t find my damn gun, then maybe I can throw some of these dumb mushy girl books at him.” Father’s? “Bingo!”

He grabbed the shiny gun instantly. He hadn’t had his gun a day when mom, who Daniel thought had skipped childhood, took it away for shooting it off in the house. It wasn’t his fault that the cat went bonkers and peed all over the carpet. He was just practicing for the day when he would finally beat Brian Kodowski at his own game and proclaim himself as too mature to ever play again.

Daniel raced his bike back to Brian’s house. He was determined to get Brian this time. It seemed like he never shot him, and he thought about the many times he had to lie on the cold, soft ground and count to ten before he could get up again. Then he had to listen to Brian gloat and proclaim his victory over “the weak little Dannyboy.” He hated being called Dannyboy. He didn’t mind the Danny part, it was the attachment of that word—boy—that really annoyed him. It seemed so degrading. None of the greats were ever called boy. Superman, Spiderman, Batman, now they were all respected. No one would dare call them mere boys. You just couldn’t respect anyone that was called boy. “I’m going to get him this time,” he said quietly to himself, as he rode his bike through the Kodowski’s ditch and into their front yard.

The moment he got off his bike, Daniel knew the game would begin, and as he hopped off he quickly scanned the area. After seeing no sign of Brian, he ran toward the backyard. He stopped on the side of the house and peered around the corner to the back. Everything seemed quiet and ordinary, except for the Kodowski dog, Fisher. Daniel noticed that the dog, lounging in pet prison, was blatantly staring at the back shed. “Brian must be over there,” he thought, “so if I run back around front to the other side of the house, I can surprise him from behind.” Before the thought was finished, Daniel was already in position and moving swiftly toward the shed.

Just as Daniel had reached the shed, Fisher began barking, and he knew that his cover was blown. His heart thumped uncontrollably as he turned the back corner of the
shed and saw Brian heading right at him. It seemed that Brian knew Daniel was coming but did not realize how close he was, because when Daniel turned the corner, they almost collided. They both raised their guns immediately. Daniel squeezed the trigger. There was the loudest bang that he had ever heard.

“For crying out loud, Brian, did you have to shoot off your gun right next to my ear?”

“You know Danny, sometimes I forget, are you a boy or a girl? And you’re the one that came barreling around the corner.”

“Ouch! That was really loud, my ears are still ringing.”

“Well, sorry, compadre, I just couldn’t resist the close shot. Plus I thought you had me. Why didn’t that gun fire?”

“I left the stupid safety on.”

“Oh! Ya’ left the stupid safety on. How unfortunate!”

“Shut up, Kodowski.”

“Well, wonderboy, that still doesn’t save ya’. You know what comes next.” Brian yelled as he started to run off to hide.

“Yeah, I know,” Daniel replied in a voice not loud enough for Brian to hear: “1-2-3456-7-8-910.”

Daniel was good at only two things when playing this game. Cheating on the count and peeking to see where Brian was heading off to hide. He did both well today and noticed that Brian went behind the willow.

Daniel clicked the safety to “off” on the gun and crawled over behind a tree close to the willow. He decided that the best way to get Brian was a showdown. He couldn’t resist tough guy macho-like challenges. He stepped out in front of the tree and yelled, “Here I am Bri, come out and get me if you are such a big man!”

Just as Daniel suspected, Brian jumped out from hiding before he could finish his sentence. Daniel fired. The strength of the gun knocked him to the ground. The noise was equally surprising. When he rose, he saw Brian lying on the ground in front of the big willow tree.

“I got him! I got him! I gotch’a’ Brian! Now count to ten nice and loud.”

“Brian, didn’t ya’ hear me? I said count to ten.”

“Brian, come on, count to ten, you have to count to ten.”

Daniel ran over to Brian’s limp body and yelled again, “Please Brian, count to ten and get up.” The tears of childhood turned to tears of sad maturity as he shook Brian and pleaded, “Count to ten Brian, please count to ten.”