

MY **LIFE** ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY SISTER IS MY MUM

A META-MEMOIR



BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

MY LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE



A story about finding yourself after accidentally discovering your life started with a lie.

Not every day do you meet someone who watched both of his parents die from The Big C and laid them to rest, only to discover sixteen years later that they weren't his parents after all!

It's like being reborn as a whole different person.

FOUNDATION
FOUNDATION



IT STARTED WITH A LIE

Eyes crack open, greeted by a dark world void of embrace. A whimper turns into a cry into wailing.

Where is everyone? Why am I alone; what is this place?

The World.

The first moments are priceless; the first moments are swept away, spiralling into oblivion, never to be captured.

The wailing ceases, with nobody present to hear, to care. They are burdened by the shackles of shame. They can't fathom an insurmountable wall is being slammed in front of someone who cannot climb.

This is not birthright.

The days slip by, blending into solitude. My caregivers (?) are trapped inside a vicious cycle of fretting about the opinions of people who don't matter.

God shouts the child is unwanted, unworthy, a shame to all.

A grifter scoops up the souls of those willfully participating in the lie and tucks them away in a compartment filled with denial, to be shaded in marginality.

1 The baby survives, and everything necessary for healthy development is wiped clean from the slate, leaving the lost child without direction.

The baby is a boy; he's unwanted.

The years slip by. The boy screams, "LOOK AT ME." His cries are muted because the people he needs to hear him the most reside inside the original lie. It's not their fault; it is – their silence rings complicit.

As the child grows into a man, it becomes abundantly clear: he will always be a child. He will always crave being held. But he will repeatedly push what he needs away. Shame has taught him he is not worthy. His cries will never be heard.

The lies fester with each passing year, becoming a reality for many. The lies become opaque.

As for the boy, the lie is everything; only he is not privy to its magnitude or existence.

Something is missing.

Try. Try. Try. Accept.

He doesn't know what he is accepting. His norm has been cast in a stone of deceit.

He thirsts for the purity of love – a love he has yet to define.

His parents grow ill. A long journey. A battle with cancer. He quakes in fear while he looks on as the devil steals their last breaths of life. He's lost. Alone again.

In the wake of the debilitating realities of loss, he doesn't understand. He never belonged.

Another year passes, the boy is loved; he pushes it away.

Why? Because he's broken, feels unworthy, unlovable.

The boy finds comedy in pain, bringing laughter to others. He finds success in short bursts, excelling at many things, making him rounded. What's hidden in his past constantly lurks, torments, threatening to destroy whatever might be next.

Nearly two decades blast by with him accomplishing much and nothing at all.

His voice is loud, and his words have meaning; the definitions are yet to be found.

He travails to become a good man. He succeeds.

Just as he accepts life is his journey to navigate, he steps up to the baggage counter to be told everything he thought once was, was never as it seemed. He becomes privy to the lie. His life is torn into shambles with nobody from his beginning present to help him cobble it back together into manageable chunks.

"Sir, come back. You can't store your baggage here."

"I don't want it. It's not mine. It is filled with deception. It is swarming with solitude. I'm not strong enough to endure. Keep it."

"Sir, that's not how life works. You must take it with you. It will haunt you forever, but; I can see in your eyes that you are meant to survive, find understanding, and thrive. Now, go, go forth, become who you are meant to be. Your voice, your narrative, belongs to many. You have been blessed with the gift of individuality and, you must be the voice for those who struggle to speak up for themselves. Your pain and heartache will never leave you; embrace the lessons they will bless you with."

2

The road fourth is a difficult one. The isolation is relentless. There is a pattering in the boy's mind, a boy who has grown into a kind man. He accepts it as his duty to share his pain and rise using comforting words. His words are not his alone.

A man is supposed to be strong. A man is supposed to overcome emotion. A man is supposed to be hardened. And the boy who is now man — is — hardened.

Because when he shares his pain, he is often met with, *"A lot of people were...."*

Each time he hears those words, he cringes, the pain intensifies, and he feels alone once more.

It's all bullshit. A man can never be a man until he discounts the manacles, draping emotions with manly limiting perceptions. He needs to cry. He needs to speak up. He does. His glorious cries are not, only, his own.

This is my story. I choose to share it with you. Beauty comes from the strength of vulnerability. We grow when we cry.

IT ALL STARTED WITH A LIE.

DAY 1

16 JULY 1960

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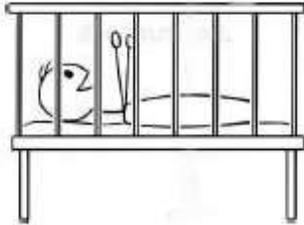
My arms are littered with goosebumps; I'm freezing – I'm new – I'm alone. I'm lying in a glass-walled container in an empty room peeking out into a darkened world. *This must be my beginning.* It is not a place of celebration. The sun is blasting through the windows, but somehow inside this less than sterile room, the bitterness of long winters to come is swallowing me. I'm not wanted; I don't know that yet. My family is burdened; my birth is bringing them despair. *I don't know that yet.* I'm never supposed to find out.

I will write about my discoveries and the unrelenting pain they will bring one day.

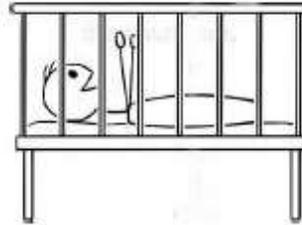
Today is not the day.

Today, my only responsibility is to breathe, cry, and scream out, **I'M HERE** – you brought me here – all I did, **WAS BE BORN.**

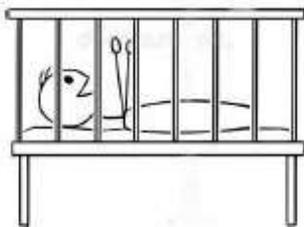
DAY 1: JULY 16, 1960



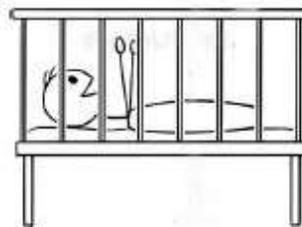
Hey. In here. Where is everyone?
Wah. Wah. Wah.
I'm new. I need you.
Am I supposed to be alone?



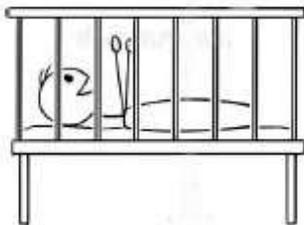
Wah. Wah. Goo. Goo.
Mother-Bleeper.
Wah. I'm scared. Hold me.
HEYWAHHHHHHH



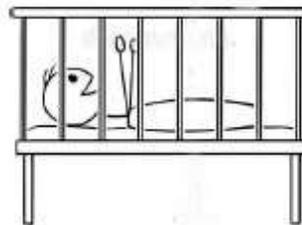
What's my name?
I don't even know my name.
What is this place?
I'm cold. Breathe. Breathe. Wahhhhhhhh.



Don't hate me. I'm sorry, contrite.
Marvelous vocabulary, baby.
Wahhh.
Somebody. Hold me. Please. What's swaddle?



I'm new. Something doesn't seem right.
It's not my fault. Who said that?
My subconscious.
I thought my only responsibility today...



...is breathing.
And poopy pants.
You're smart, subconscious.
It's not your fault.

SHAME

Rebekah & Nicholas did not want another child, *especially* at their ages, forty-six + fifty-six. After all, they already had six, three girls + three boys.
Before I continue with the story of Day 1, let me introduce the family.

Spoiler Alert: My family.

This section will bounce in timeframes, but in the end, it will return to the beginning, to this first day, of what is undoubtedly to be life rich with possibilities. If you haven't guessed by now, I am the boy in this tale – I have yet to be given a name.

As for my family:

BERNICE – FIRST BORN – BORN IN 1937

Bernice was born during the Great Depression in a prairie town on January 1, the firstborn, first day, a great start.

Troubled and resistant is the best way to describe Bernice. Nicholas wanted a son to carry forth the family name. To brag about amongst his peers down at the garage, Rebekah cursed him with a daughter. Nicholas's disdain for his daughter manifested in her fighting his every word.

Bernice would grow into a beautiful young lady with flowing dark brown hair. An emptiness filled her troubled eyes as she longed for her father's love. *It never came.* At least, he could not show it – this crushed Bernice's spirit. To rebel, she dragged with her any guy she could attract with her sultry vivaciousness, from the parking lot of the Five-and-Dime to more secluded spots in the woods by the Pitcher Butte reservoir. Bernice's dance card never lacked company – filling with meaningless trysts. She did so to punish her father. What she didn't realize, she was punishing herself as well. Bernice's reputation grew, overflowing with toxicity, she became *'one of those girls'* – never to be brought home to a suitor's family. She became a rich source of gossip for the purer girls her age.

Rebekah desperately tried to coddle her. *"Honey, your father isn't a bad man. It's not your fault; you were the firstborn. Men want men – it is as simple as that. Darling, the day's men, are hardened, cold, emotionally limited. It's not his fault he doesn't know how to comfort you. He is a product of the times."*

'A product of the times' – empty words the newborn boy would certainly hear later in life when he'd inevitably be forced to make sense of this day. *The fucking times. The fucking times.*

Rebekah's words rang hollow. Bernice continued her persecution: Roger. Ben. Chuck. Tyler. Elmer.

Bernice was a famous, beautiful, creative, angry young woman who desperately needed to break free from home. To escape. Bernice urgently needed to find love. Bernice also

needed to find a way to hurt her father, her venom ran deep within her soul. There was no salve to cure her needs.

Bernice shouted out opinions in a time when opinions were only to come from the mouths of men.

With her being the first and the new baby being the seventh, one might think a sister/brother bond would instantly grow, with the eldest protecting the youngest from his older brothers. But it didn't. For the most part, she was absent from the new boy's life. Instead, she escaped the family by moving with Sadie to Alberta to work for the telephone company as an operator. Bernice + Sadie would only roll back to the family home for the holidays, and the family would only visit them during the family's summer vacations.

She wanted to stay in the boy's life. Still, for some unbeknownst reason, when she did, she delivered an unrelenting running commentary telling the young boy he'd never amount to anything or be as good as his older brothers.

Her words were scorching with hatred. Not. Love. Her words stung. The only way to describe how she was going to treat the youngest: BITCH.

Like her father, she became a chain-smoker, more on him later.

Bernice + Sadie: attractive in a flight-attendant sort of way. When they weren't teasing the men around town, they traipsed around the world, searching for adventure and healing.

SADIE - SECOND BORN - 24 NOVEMBER 1938

Sadie has lived her entire life with Bernice and still does.

In the future, when Bernice tossed venomous judgement-filled words toward the youngest, Sadie frantically tried to cull Bernice's visceral assaults. Sadie chose to live her life in Bernice's shadows. She witnessed Nicholas's scorn for Bernice and slipped into the personality of a church mouse instead of becoming a vociferous protester.

Her calm nature helped to balance out Bernice's cruelty toward the newborn.

Eventually, Bernice + Sadie landed in Calgary, moving into an apartment on the twenty-second floor of a twenty-nine-storey apartment building in the city's heart. THE. BIG. CITY.

The family visited once per year.

During the visits, Bernice's acerbic chants rang down. *Lindsay, you'll never – Lindsay, you'll never – Lindsay, you'll never –*

In 1972, one visit springs to mind, just after the boy (me) turned twelve – the family had no reservations in allowing me to roam the streets of Calgary alone. IN. THE. BIG. CITY. ALONE.

Sadie seemed broken, defeated, meek, and Bernice will live up to becoming a bitch.

BEVERLY – THIRD BORN - 1944

Beverley never summoned the strength to demand what she needed. She retreated into solitude. She felt like an outsider in the family with no place of belonging. With all her might, Rebekah tried to provide comfort – but Nicholas’s derision worsened every day when he returned from work to be surrounded by women, women he could not shower with affection. Nicholas began to feel like a failure. The girls paid a heavy price.

Bev eventually met Garth, who tugged Beverly toward eternal salvation by promising her never-ending happiness within the grasp of Jehovah. Garth poured her heaping helpings of Kool-Aid, and Bev drank it in, hoping to be coddled.

The church demanded clean living and 10% of practitioners’ incomes.

Garth failed to let the church know he loved booze, nicotine, and the utterance of profanities. As well, Garth had a penchant for chasing skirts. And Garth always went to great lengths to avoid the collection plate.

Garth is blind in one eye. Later in this story, the family will find the new baby shares partial blindness with Garth. Garth’s blind eye was glass. Garth liked frequenting smoke-filled dive bars. He’d belly up to the bar, sit beside a trashy vixen, buy her a drink. Before she could take her first sip, Garth would slip his glass eye into her tumbler.

Garth whisked Bev away from the family home before today.

7 Later in the story, the boy is given a name, + a series of childhood memories will be shared. The boy’s first childhood memory could very well have been being the ringbearer at Bev & Garth’s wedding. I looked adorable; I was told.

Bev & Garth eventually relocated to Calgary and have two daughters: Shannon + Aimee.

JAMES – FOURTH BORN – FIRST-BORN SON - 1948

Finally!

Nicholas revered James, who became a star athlete until he suffered a career-ending leg injury.

James grew up during the Civil Rights Movement and the beginning of Free Love + experimentation, like Bernice + Sadie + Beverly; James was gone from home shortly after this day.

James was a poster boy for the times. He rode a motorcycle, had friends named Grog; his youngest brother would eventually think he was cool. James would rarely be home during the boy’s early years – when he was; he’d provide caring. James looked out for his baby brother. He cheered for him. And he picked him up when the boy’s other siblings knocked him down.

When James eventually left the family nest, he secured a long well-respected career with the Alberta Government.

He is married to Charlotte, moved to Edmonton, and has two daughters: Robyn + Allison.

DONALD – FIFTH BORN - 1952

Donald became a star athlete. When Don's athletic accomplishments started filling the local rags' sports pages, Nicholas gushed with pride. Don became the top high school quarterback in Saskatoon, delivering him a steady stream of coeds. He dawned white cleats ala Broadway Joe Namath of the New York Jets. He'd play hard, partied hard, and he basked in the glow of the celebrity status of a small-town hero.

With Bernice + Sadie + Beverly, + James gone from home, Donald was showered with fatherly love. He could do no wrong. If he ran afoul of society's rules, Nicholas would retrieve him before bad decisions, often alcohol-fueled escalated.

Don eventually evolved, with his life pursuits switching from athletic to intellectual. Luckily, Don had been blessed with a keen ability for critical thought. His intellect served him well in obtaining a master's degree from Queen's University. In turn, he'd take his educational acumen and parlay it into a lengthy (still) career with the Government of Saskatchewan, rising to the rank of Deputy Minister.

He resides in Regina with his wife Naomi and their son Matthew.

One day, the boy will want to be just like Don.

BRIAN – SIX BORN - 1956

We almost come full circle.

Bernice, loud, rebellious, opinionated – at times, a bitch.

Sadie, timid, shy, quiet, protective of Bernice, suffering from father-broken esteem, craving love.

Beverly, frightened, left out, pliable – slipping into a religious world where the fitting in she so desperately craves – only exists in an ephemeral sham. There are no meadows or selected few.

James, a firstborn boy, was to be held on a pedestal.

Donald was a shining star.

And now Brian, saddled with the unenviable role of following the revered first two sons. With the rest of his siblings moving out into their lives, Brian would be left with his younger brother to witness the bombardment of dragged-out, tear-inducing fights about money Nicholas and Rebekah would engage in nightly.

Nicholas would rarely be kind to him. Instead, he often became the target of his wrath. He fought for mum, deflecting Nicholas's rancorous attacks at her.

Nicholas was a dick to him. Nicholas looked down on him. Brian wasn't a star athlete, nor was he outspoken. Nicholas's degradation toward Brian dropped him into the world of timidity.

Brian is a wonderful man who would act as Rebekah's somewhat fragile rock.

AS FOR NICHOLAS & REBEKAH

Nicholas struggled with showing love and support and resisted vulnerability.

Nicholas's advancing age would erase his ability to teach his seventh-born to throw a ball or ride a bike.

He was a hard-living, scotch-swilling, chain-smoking man.

On this day, Nicholas's age would lessen the grip of a father-son bond. The strength weakened by 'the times' breaking men, turning many of them into proud, strong, brooding men who were stubborn to a fault. Nicholas found the debilitating powers of community + religious shame consuming his direction, making him another pawn draped in the bullshit of worrying about others' limiting minds and opinions.

Like many men, he failed his family by caring far too much about what other people think.

Nicholas had an angry streak. At times, he'd repeatedly slam his fists into his head, drawing blood, causing Rebekah to recoil in a corner, shaking, crying, pleading for the insanity to end, only to have it end when she cried herself to sleep. Brian was often in the position of yelling at Nicholas until he was tired of his anger.

Nicholas would become a deteriorating older man, forced to spend his golden years struggling to support his family. The newborn, a seventh child, was a curse to him.

Nicholas would wear the curse openly.

He would grow to blame his new son for the family's increasing financial strains.

Rebekah was the rock and the family foundation.

Most of the new boys, friends' parents were at least twenty years younger than his.

Rebekah's walk-through life was to be a challenging one. She would have to deal with her husband's short fuse daily, taking the brunt of his temper.

Rebekah's struggles could never entirely break this proud, loving, and fantastic caregiver. Rebekah was the family's permanent glue. She showered her children in love through her actions. Rebekah worked herself to exhaustion, sacrificing happiness to ensure the family never went hungry.

Her new son needed her warmth.

Rebekah's new son glommed onto her. A few years later, he'd maximize their time together, alone. Every Saturday, when the baby turns into a boy after Rebekah finished her sixth day of the workweek, she will take the boy grocery shopping. The boy will have one request; they must go down every aisle. She loved her lovely seventh child. She would keep him warm.

Rebekah was nurturing.

Nicholas, a rough hard man.

Their union seemed odd to those sitting in the shameful bleachers of judgement.

Nicholas's family was hard-living and cold. Rarely present.

Rebekah's family was tight-knit and highly religious, with their proclivities residing in Protestantism.

Rebekah's father was a pastor in the Wild West. He'd spent time with Wild Bill Hickok and Buffalo Bill Cody.

Nicholas's + Rebekah's families were opposites. That never stopped Nicholas from sweeping Rebekah off her feet. He promised her much.

Rebekah became a black sheep by accepting Nicholas's advances when her family failed to force a wedge between their sprouting love.

If Rebekah's family succeeded in driving the wedge between them, the yet-to-be-named boy, me, born on this day, wouldn't be telling you this story.

BEULAH HOUSE

A group of cottages + the main house run by mortals interpreting the words of God. Beulah House sat in seclusion on a plot of land, a few miles north of Edmonton's city center – hidden from the prying eyes and the often-disparaging minds of Christianity. Its sole purpose was to fix young girls and women deemed unfortunate, fallen, needy, erring, wandering, women who had stepped aside from society's norms or women who allowed themselves to be raped.

10

Young women who continued to fall, becoming repeat visitors, were often sent to the sterilization room for further treatment. Men and women acting on behalf of God dubbed these women as feeble-minded, unable to control carnal urges.

The home's prime directive was to scrub the shattered women's minds of sinful ways, erasing flawed morals, and finally, preparing the floundering women to be cleansed and available for marriage. Beulah House's counsellors provided these women Interdenominational Christian Guidance to help them recover to a healthy, moral, and spiritual life.



As for the babies, in this case, the bouncing baby boy was labelled Saturday. Saturday was to be a temporary name until the family decided on the outcome of this unwanted child. The newborns were often ripped out of their mother's arms a few moments after birth so the healing process could begin for the straying woman.

The church decided it was for the best. They were, of course, acting on behalf of their interpretations of God's will.

As for the babies, they were nothing more than painful reminders of failing.

In simpler terms: who the fuck cares.

Christianity was too busy patting itself on its back, believing these harsh steps and reality were for the betterment of the broken families and their wayward girls who had fallen from grace. Christianity thought the world would be a better place if the demon seeds were removed from their origins – to be spoken of no more.

The Beulah Home staff and donors advertised aggressively for adoption, including advertisements in the Edmonton Journal. An ad was immediately placed, highlighting a trio of children for adoption or purchase.

- Saturday was listed as Baby #3 – A pensive, Canadian-born child with sparkling brown eyes from a family of dairy farmers. Of strong stock.

Saturday, wasn't even a day old, and his destiny in the eyes of the lord dripped in deception + if he could be swept under the carpet – it would be for the best.

Saturday (me) had been ripped from my mother's arms and immediately placed in a glass crib in a dimly lit room, equipped with nothing more than the crib and a rocking chair.

Bernice and Sadie were present for the birth. They sat, weeping in the waiting room, waiting for Rebekah and Nicholas to decide on my next breaths' destined location.

God's instructions had been issued.

What about the baby?

Nothing at Beulah House was about the babies. But, like a Day Labour Agencies worker, a frustrating necessity for continued profit – the babies were nothing more than an inconvenience and a source of income for the home.

Nick's eyes boiled with fury, he spat out his words in a torrent of rage, *"I will decide what to do with the child. We will never speak a goddam word of this day to anyone. Today is bringing us insurmountable shame."*

Rebekah whimpered, as tears poured from her eyes.

Nick continued ranting, *"I wanted a son who'd carry on the family legacy. But no, daughter, daughter, fucking daughter. You've failed me. The price is heavy. We will be shunned."*

Rebekah swept away her tears from her face with her left hand; her voice cracked. *"Stop it. Stop it, you horrible man. I have no control over a boy or girl. It is in God's hands. Look what you've done to the girls. They have never felt loved."*

"You're insane. I love our daughters. You have no idea what it is like to be a man. A man whose seed only produces girls is looked down upon. I show my love. I provide a roof. Food. A future. Now, this."

"I gave you three boys. You treated James and Donald like Gods. At what expense to the girls? Don't you think they suffered every time you spoke glowingly about the boys? You treated them poorly. And – "

"And I, fucking, what?" Nicholas slammed his fists forcefully into his face. *"I fucking gave them a home. Bernice, our dear Bernice, runs around town, dragging our name through the mud. I should – "*

"You should have what? You despicable bastard. Maybe if you weren't so Goddam concerned about what others thought and showed the girls love. Maybe, just maybe, Bernice wouldn't have had to rebel to gain your attention. You did this to her. You did this to all of them. You are not a man. You are a coward."

Nick's fury was reaching a breaking point. *"Shut up. Shut up. Shut up. This is your fault; you failed at directing the girls. You let, Bernice, stray. Your inaction and lack of motherly guidance are what sent the girls down broken paths. Paths leading to this. This horrific event. A rape. This baby is cursed. The sooner we rid the family of this toxic reminder – the better."*

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Rebekah collapsed to the ground, rolled onto her back, pulling herself up onto a chair. Her voice quaked. *"We need to give Saturday a fighting chance. Not only did you break the spirit of the girls, but you broke Brian's as well. I will not let you destroy Saturday. He may be the product of rape. We will never truly know for sure. Everything from the night of the alleged rape is draped in a dense fog – the act itself a blur. What I do know for certain, God is wrong. Nobody deserves to be raped, and for Christ's sake, tearing the child away from his birth family is blasphemy."*

Nicholas slammed his fists once more into his face, stumbling toward a window. *"This baby is the shame of the family. If we acknowledge its existence, we will be the town's laughingstock. We will never breathe a word. I alone will decide what to do. The baby must go. You gave me three girls, four including yourself, and look at what the evils of women produce. A demon child. A product of sickness. The baby must go."*

A car pulls up to the cabin. Out hopped Jim and Rosemary, Rebekah's sister, and her husband. In-laws who reside on Rebekah's father's, a pastor, dairy farm. *"I will decide. And, my decision, in the meantime until he's adopted or sold. I will not allow him to be in our sight."*

With the decision made and Rebekah teetering on the edge of destruction, Jim and Rosemary scooped Saturday into their arms, delicately placing me in their car. Jim rolled down the driver's window. Nicholas looked in and calmly stated, *"Let me know when he is finally gone. Do not contact us for anything else."*

Nicholas watched as they drove away. He sighed deeply when the car disappeared over the horizon. Moments later, three of the women in his life piled with him into the family Cadillac. Rebekah, Bernice, and Sadie were drowning in tears – Nicholas pulled away, knowing what he just put into motion would likely destroy his family's core. For what?

Just so Jack the grocer, or Stanley the gas jockey, or Susan the chef at the local diner, would never speak poorly of them? What a load of bullshit.

As for me, for the time being, Saturday, I would undoubtedly become **Lucky Number Seven**.

A pensive, Canadian-born child, with sparkling brown eyes, from a family of dairy farmers. Of strong stock.

I may have started as the shame of...everything. But, in hindsight, if there is one blessing to be taken from this day, Saturday, I would most certainly live a life showered in individuality, hopefully, something that would serve me well later in life.

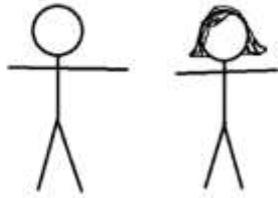
For now, however long that may, be, I belonged to Jim + Rosemary and the sermons of a pastor.

From this brilliant July day forward, everyone in the family agreed to participate in a lifelong lie. They were to divorce themselves from reality. Ultimately the lie was going to impact only one person, the baby boy,

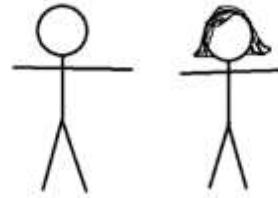
Those participating in the lie chose to give up their souls that day.

AS FOR THE BABY—

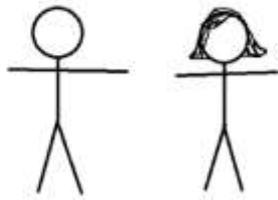
SHAME + BEULAH HOUSE



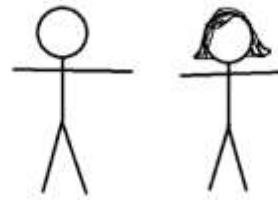
I will decide what we do with the child.
We will not say a goddam thing about this day.
Today is bringing us insurmountable shame.
I wanted a son to carry on my legacy.



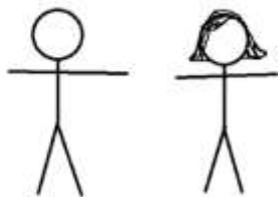
But no, daughter, daughter, fucking daughter.
Stop it. Stop it, you are a horrible man.
It's in God's hands.
Look what you've done to the girls.



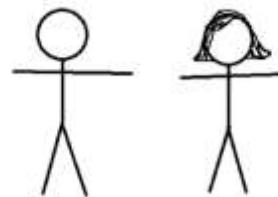
They never felt loved.
You have no idea what it's like to be a man.
I provide a roof. Food. A future. I show love.
I gave you three boys.



You treated the girls poorly.
I gave them a fucking home.
And what does Bernice do—she runs around—
—dragging my name through the mud.



Maybe if you weren't so concerned about—
—what those who don't matter think and showed—
Shut up. This is your fault.
You let Bernice, stray. And now this.



This baby is a curse.
As soon as we get rid of the toxic reminder—
|Sobbing|
—we will get rid of the baby and never say another word.

BEULAH HOUSE FOR UNFORTUNATE WOMEN + GIRLS



What is this place?

Cottages + a Main House.

Sanctioned by religion. A product of the times.

Christianity.



A place to fix young girls + women.

Those deemed unfortunate, fallen, needy...

...erring, wandering, women who had stepped...

...away from societies norms or women who...



...allowed themselves to be raped.

Christianity + A product of the times.

Stray twice: Get sent to the sterilization room.

God dubbed these women: feeble-minded...



...unable to control carnal urges.

What about the babies?

Unwanted demon seeds to be removed so—

—the broken women could be fixed—



—and become marriageable again.

Off to farm families or—

—sold to rich American families.

Christianity. A product of the times.



Ripped from their mother's arms at birth.

Never to be spoken of again.

Gone and soon to be forgotten.

What about the babies? Who cares?

To qualify for an adoption prospective parents needed only to hold some sort of a paying job.

NAME DAY

13 JULY 1963

Jim + Rosemary was exhausted. Not only were they encumbered with fostering an unwanted, nameless child, nicknamed Saturday – Saturday, simply because it was the day he was born. They also faced the daunting task of working seemingly endless hours running a thriving dairy farm, while raising a family of their own.

They did the best they could, but my presence was subtracting greatly from their future. Jim + Rosemary loved me, but they longed for a different family member to take on the burden.

On this simmering, coincidentally Saturday, Saturday summer day, Bernice + Sadie rolled up their driveway.

Bernice sported a wide grin. *“Jim, Rosemary, we’ll take care of Saturday for the day. You guys deserve a break. Go on. Be free. Enjoy your day!”*

Without hesitation, Jim + Rosemary jumped into their Packard pick-up, its engine roared to life, and Jim stomped on the gas, racing up the drive, turning left toward the big city.

16
Bernice took Saturday into her arms and walked him to her car. And they, too, drove into the city. Then, one hour later, Bernice pulled her wheels to the corner of Jasper Avenue + 97th Street, parked, and sauntered the few blocks to the Vital Stats Office. Today, Saturday would be given a name, a final act of defiance by Bernice, to hurt her father. It was becoming abundantly clear Saturday would likely remain un-adopted or un-sold, so Bernice wanted to give him permanence. Perhaps, her kindest moment.

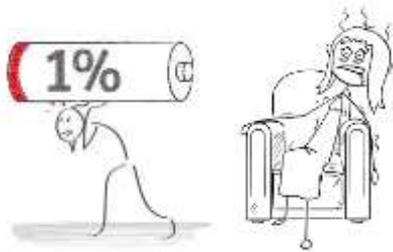
She filled out the last name: **Wincherauk**, Middle Name: **Left Blank**, First Name: **Lindsay**.

Whether intentional or not, Bernice’s truth to never be told selected a girl’s name for Rebekah’s seventh child. Bernice knew the name would twist the knife deeper into Nicholas’s soul.

When they returned to the farm, Rebekah’s sister Priscilla, and her husband Roy, were waiting. They had agreed to relieve Jim + Rosemary of the responsibility of raising **SHAME**.

NAME DAY

13 JULY 1963



Jim + Rosemary, were, at the end of their ropes.

It's time to rid ourselves of Saturday—
—and focus on our stable of children.

Jim, I love the boy. I don't have energy left.



The boy had been dubbed "Saturday."

Because it was the day of his birth.
And because, he was supposed to be only—
—a temporary family addition.

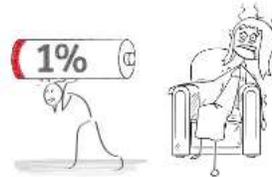


Bernice + Sadie pulled up to the dairy farm.

Sadie was driving a brand-new Riviera.

Bernice: We'll take care of Saturday for the day.

Go on. Be free. Enjoy your day!



Thank you, girls. You're lifesavers!



Vroom

Jim + Rosemary blast away to freedom.

Sadie + Bernice hopped into the Riviera.

They rushed to vital stats in—

Downtown Edmonton.



It's time to give Saturday a name?

Masculine? Cultured? Classic?

No. No. No. Let's make Nicholas pay.

Write babies first name on the line: Lindsay

HOME SWEET HOME

11 JUNE 1965

“Nicholas, we’ve put in our time. We love Lindsay, but we want to get on with our lives. You said this would be temporary. It’s been two years; nobody wants to adopt a five-year-old boy; you need to accept that. So, take Lindsay, give him a home, and treat him like one of your own.” Roy said in a calm timber.

“Another year. Give it another year. We can’t have reminders of the rape staring at us and torturing us every day. He will be adopted. I’m confident of that. Please keep him.” Nicholas pleaded without saying Lindsay’s name.

“No,” Priscilla added, ending the pointless debate. *“He’s a special boy. You must give him a stable home. You must swallow your derision and love him like what he is, one of your own. I don’t want to hear another word. Lindsay is your child. You need to treat him that way. You must stop passing him around like a hot potato.”*

Nicholas took one final swig of coffee. Bit into one of Priscilla’s famous butter tarts, flakes of crust scattering onto his shirt. Another sip. Another bite. Nicholas took Lindsay by the hand, grabbed a bag full of his clothes, deposited him in the back seat of the Caddy, and cranked the ignition. With the engine humming to life, Nicholas lowered his window.

“We will take him until he’s adopted. Thank you for your time. But one thing I want to make clear, we shall never breathe a word, to anyone, about where he came from. He can never know. Nor can the people in our lives. We all must take this sordid secret with us until the end of our days.”

Priscilla and Roy reluctantly nodded in agreement as the Caddy drove east, heading to Lindsay’s new and hopefully permanent home on the outskirts of Saskatoon.

HOME SWEET HOME

11 JUNE 1965



Uncle Roy + Aunt Priscilla talk with Nicholas.
Nick, we've put in our time.
We love Lindsay but it's time for us now.
You must face it; nobody wants a five-year-old.



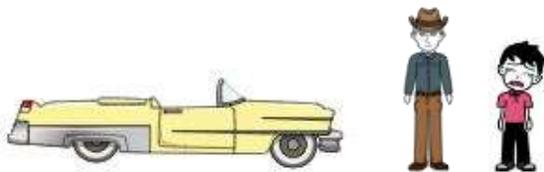
Give it one more year, please.
Someone will want Lindsay, you'll see.
No, Nick, Lindsay's special.
He needs a stable home.



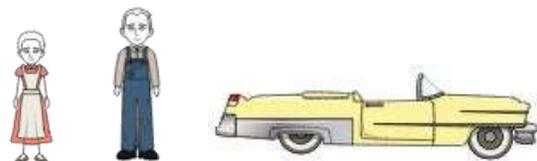
You must love him. Forget about the rape.
He's one of your own. He needs to be loved.
Stop passing him around like a hot potato.
He needs a stable home.



Nick takes a swig of coffee +
a bite from one of Priscilla's famous butter tarts.
Flakes fall on his shirt.
I need to go. I'll take the damn kid.



Let's go boy. Jump in the car.
I heard you can't afford it.
Shut up. Shut up.
He needs a stable home.



Priscilla, Roy, I want to make this clear—
—we'll never breathe a word about—
—where he came from.



Can I have a dog? No.

The garage and diner bustled most days with farm families stopping by for a quick bite or to fill up with gas on the way back to their homesteads.

CLOSING TIME: 6 PM

On most nights, by 6:30, the last straggler, who usually partook in the odd tumbler of scotch with Nicholas, left, leaving the highway empty for the night, apart from the occasional vehicle heading toward the bright lights of the city.

Our closest neighbour lived three miles away.

FIRST MEMORY

My fragile five-year-old mind could not recall a single event from my first years of life. It was as if every memory had been scrubbed clean.

The clock struck seven. My parents were heading to town for a rare night out. A time to forget their hardships. I watched the taillights of dad's Caddy disappear as they sped down the highway toward Saskatoon. The clouds hung low in the early night sky on this chilly September evening, creating a brilliant city silhouette.

One last flicker of the taillights and mum and dad were gone; I turned to go back inside our house.

CLICK

21 I ran to the door. The door was locked. I frantically banged on the door. I screamed at the top of my lungs, "LET ME IN." I began to shake in fear. Tears rolled down my cheeks.

Thirty minutes passed.

A light standard at the entrance to the gas station began hissing and crackling as if it were about to expire. Insects buzzed around its dim glow. The only other lights around were the city lights miles away.

My shivering intensified as thirty minutes turned into eternity as pitch black had arrived. In the distance, I could hear a dog howl, or it could have been a hungry coyote.

I slammed my fists on the door with every ounce of might in one last frantic attempt for salvation. Finally, I heard the clack of the lock again. The door opened, I rushed inside, trembling; the house was draped in blackness. I dove under the chesterfield hiding from my brothers' who were chanting in unison in a continuous loop.

"Lindsay, you are not one of us. We are going to get you. You are not one of us."

Hours later, mum and dad returned home. I rushed from underneath the couch into mum's arms when they entered the house.

My voice cracked and trembled, *"They said I'm not one of them."*

"Of course, you are," Rebekah stated in the calmest of tones.

My brothers were nineteen, thirteen and seventeen at the time.

I WAS FIVE.

SECOND MEMORY

While taking a bath, Donald entered the bathroom carrying the family cat and threw it into the tub with me.

THIRD MEMORY

My brother Brian smashed me in the back of the head with a brick when we played in the dirt hills; I was rushed to the hospital in need of stitches.

FOURTH MEMORY

Donald and Brian encouraged me to stick my dinner knife into a wall socket.

THAT'S ENOUGH REMINISCING FOR NOW.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

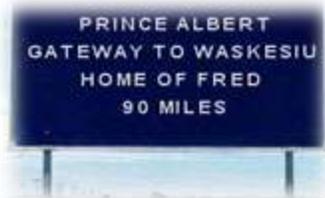
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN



Nicholas (Dad) ran the gas station.
Rebekah (Mom) ran the diner.
Bernice + Sadie + Beverly had left the nest.
I shared a room with Brian + Donald.



James had his own room.
We lived 4-miles from Saskatoon.
On the city's outskirts.
Edmonton my birth city: 325 miles away.



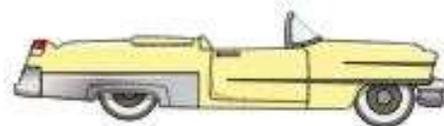
Around the corner of the gas station—
—sat bailers, combines + tractors.
Occasionally we'd find a missing pet—
dead inside the farm machinery.



Dirt hills falling into a slough—
—sat 30 feet from the door of our home.
A wonderful playground.
And a potentially watery graveyard



I imagined navigating the waterways in
a Polaris Nuclear Sub.
My brothers suggested that was a good idea.
I placed my order.



Mom + Dad left for a rare night on the town.
NIGHT TURNED PITCH BLACK.
James + Donald + Brian threw me outside.
A coyote howled.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN



CLICK. The door locked.
I cried. I pounded on the door.
30 minutes passed before they let me inside.
"Lindsay you're not one of us."
Was chanted repeatedly.



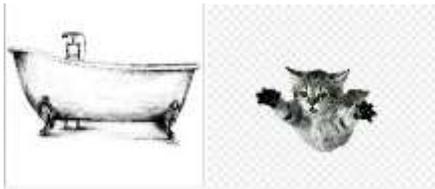
"Ooh, Lindsay you are not one of us."
Tears blasted from my eyes.
"Lindsay, you're not one of us."
My weeping became critical.
I dove under the sofa, crying, shaking.



"Lindsay, you're not one of us."
"Lindsay, you're not one of us."
I'm going to die.
"You're not one of us. We are going to get you."

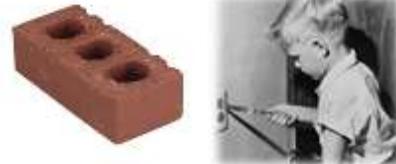


Mom and Dad come home.
"Mommy, Mommy, they said I wasn't one of them."
"Of course, you are, sweetie."
My brothers were 9, 13, and 17. I was 5.



2ND MEMORY

Brother Donald tossed our cat—
—into the tub while I was bathing.



3RD + 4TH MEMORIES

Brian - Brick to the back of my head [stitches].
Don + Brian - Here Linds, stick this in the wall.

NO CURFEW

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

1968

Poverty paid our family a visit. Dad had crushed his hand inside the workings of a combine. Poverty forced our family to move into a subsidized apartment complex called Sturby Place. Sturby Place was the epitome of *the 'wrong side of the tracks.'*

We were moving into the big city, where I would make *real friends* instead of a life filled with *imaginary ones*. I hid from my brothers' continuous wrath inside a walk-in closet inside our home on the outskirts of town. There I had created a rich fantasy world to appease my fragile psyche and hide from my older brothers' physical and mental assaults.

I rallied the neighbourhood kids together by organizing sporting events. My popularity grew with each game played.

Dad needed rehabilitation. Mum was forced to bring home the proverbial bacon. Rebekah took a job as the kitchen manager at the Coachman Restaurant in Market Mall. Mum began to break down from exhaustion. Lucky Number 7: became her scourge; my presence made it necessary for her to continue working to provide for the family.

Guilt reminded me that she'd have had an easier life if it were not for me.

Before dad's injury, the nightly battles would erupt.

6 PM SHARP - DAILY

5:59.58 - 5:59.59 - 5:59. CLICK —

Dad

Why isn't dinner ready? I work hard every damn day.

Mum

I slave away all day in the Diner. Give me a moment to unwind. I will have the family dinner ready soon.

Dad

Damn it! Is it too much to ask? I put the food on this table.

Mum

Why did you buy yourself a new car? You know we can't afford it.

Dad

Don't talk about what I can and can't afford. I work hard. You don't do enough. I at least deserve food on the table when... Why are you crying? Stop it. Get back here. Damn kid.

Mum

Don't say that. Don't say things in front of...

Me

Mommy don't cry. I'm sorry. See what you've done, Daddy, leave her be.

Lindsay, Lindsay, you don't belong here. Lindsay, you're not one of us –

Indeed, tomorrow would be better.

5:59.58 – 5:59.59 – 5:59. CLICK –

I was wrong.

Every single night, after my father walked a few yards from the garage to our home, the war would rage on.

Every single night, with my eyes stained with tears, I retreated to the closet to hang out with my imagination.

I asked my imagination if I would have a life filled with insecurity and dysfunction.

My imagination gave me a blank stare.

I asked friends at school if their parents fought every day. They told me it's embarrassing how much they're always touching and kissing.

I'd ask my friends how old their parents were. Most would say twenty-five.

Mum was on the verge of collapse. Dad's injury caused him to become more angry + bitter. He was quickly turning into a jaded old man. Eventually, he returned to work. He could no longer handle the grind of being a mechanic. Instead, he took a position as a commissionaire at Saskatoon's airport. A job reserved for those who'd served in the military. Despite returning to work, his scotch drinking and chain-smoking were inflicting a heavy toll, dad's health began a steady decline.

I feared home. I tried to avoid it as much as possible. Instead, I continued organizing games for neighbourhood kids. Each night, the porch lights of Sturby Place started flashing in a seemingly choreographed dance, announcing it was time to retreat home.

OUR PORCH LIGHT NEVER FLASHED.

NO CURFEW: SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN: 1968



Why isn't dinner ready?
I work hard every day.



I slave away all day in the diner.
Let me unwind. I will have dinner ready soon.



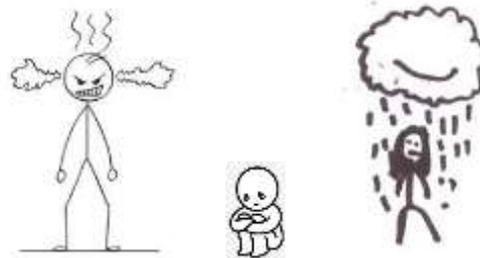
Damn it. Is it too much to ask?
I put the food on this table.
Why did you buy a new car?
We can't afford it.



Don't tell me what to do.
I deserve to be fed when I get home.
You don't do enough.
Why are you crying? Get back here.



Damn kid. If we didn't have the...
Don't say stuff in front of the boy.
It's not his fault.

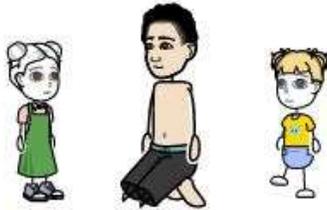


Mommy don't cry. I'm sorry.
Daddy see what you've done, leave her be.
"Lindsay you're not one of us."

NO CURFEW: SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN: 1968

140 C0K1EM: 242K41004 242K41CHEM44: 1209

6:59 pm



I got to go; Mum flashed the porch light.

7:16 pm



We got to go; Dad flashed the porch light.

141 FILE ON THE 24024 LIFE

NO CURFEW: SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN: 1968
TĀO COKĪEM: SĀSĀKĀTĪOONĪ SĀSĀKĀTĪCHEMĀNĪ: TĀOŌ

7:17 pm



I got to go; Mum flashed the porch light.

7:20 pm



I got to go; wah, porch light flashing.

NO CURFEW: SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN: 1968

7:27 pm



Mummy! Daddy!

11:59 pm



Mummy! Daddy! Anybody?

TV TRAYS

1968

Time to eat. Son, if you can't feed yourself, surviving what life throws ⁽¹⁾ at you will be far more than unnerving. Far more.

How much further?

The circumference of the earth is a whack of miles. If you can't feed yourself, it will be a whack to the infinity.

What does that even mean?

It means you will starve with your body eventually consuming itself one morsel at a time.

Imagine sitting there minding your business, and you feel a sharp pain; you look down, and your left hand is being swallowed by your wrist. Eventually, there will be another acute pain, and your elbow will be consuming your wrist. The estimated time for full self-consumption: one or two weeks.

Gross. What part of me will eat me last, my brain?

I must say, if you believe what I'm telling you, you won't have to worry about your brain-eating anything because you're likely suffering from brain damage.

Okay.

Anyway, let's feed you; it's a parents' responsibility to children the tools to have a nutrition-filled life.

Where to begin. Oh my, McDonald's just opened. So, let's hop into the Lincoln and blast away to the drive-thru for this once-in-a-while ⁽²⁾ treat.



MCDONALD'S
MCDONALD'S



Yum. Yum. Yum. Surgery fries. Cola. Cola. Cola. I want a larger size. ⁽³⁾ I could eat this almost every day ⁽⁴⁾. It must be good for you; there's a happy clown + a thief ⁽⁵⁾ teaching us valuable life lessons. Mummy. Daddy. Can we make it more than once in a while?

When you get older, do what you will; all we can do is provide you with the tools.

TV TRAYS

TV TRAYS



32

Dinner time. Mum is spent from work. Dad's nightly tirade is complete. Turn on the tube. "Boy, can you break out the TV Trays?"

I do.

Gone were the days of sitting at the table and eating together.

On this day, we ate off mountain vistas. Yesterday, it was flowers. Tomorrow, it will be a combination.

"What's for dinner, Mum?"

Swanson, delicious. Please remember to keep the foil covering the desert.

"I'm sorry, mummy, your life must be tedious."

"Is it too much to have dinner ready when I get home from work?"

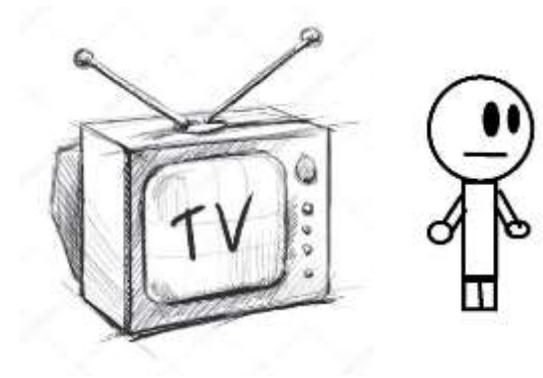
Dad, you walked all of, I don't know, ten steps from the garage, now, shut it.

Did I say that out loud? I hope not. If I did, it would be bad for mum.

"Boy, turn on the TV."

"I already did, papa."

"Go stand by the set and wiggle the antenna." Wiggle. Wiggle. Wiggle. "There. Hold it. There. Great."



"Nicholas, his dinner will get cold."

"Wiggle. There."

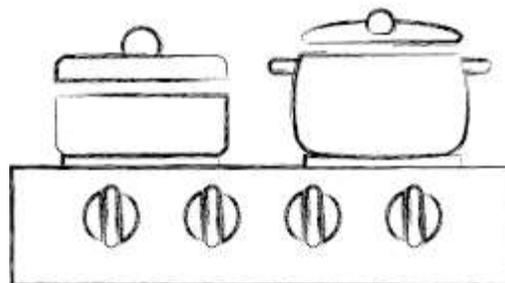
33

A gory story comes on.

"Damn it, kid. Turn the channel. I. WILL. NOT. WATCH. THIS. SHIT. DURING. DINNER. That's better: Bobby + Sissy."

"Mummy, my dinner is cold."

TWO TYPES OF MACARONI



It's Wednesday, yippee, Macaroni Night - two kinds, 1) Homemade: Macaroni + Cheese Whiz ⁽⁶⁾ + 2) Macaroni and Canned tomatoes. Both loaded with pepper. Boil. Boil. Stir. Slop onto a plate. Eat.

Satiated.

I will be a brilliant chef.

CINNAMON TOAST + CHEESE TOAST

Treat time.

"Mum, can you make me a treat."

"Sweetie, what are you doing with the Wonder Bread?"



"Mummy, I like pulling it away from the crust. Rolling it around in my fingers until it is a perfect ball. Then, I pop it into my mouth and let the lusciousness melt."

"Lusciousness. Interesting choice of words. Sweetie, grab me a couple of slices. I will show you how to make the easiest, best-est treat imaginable."

34

Pop. Golden brown.

"Grab a spoon. Spread a generous helping of butter onto the toast. Rub it in with the back of a teaspoon. Sprinkle it with surgery goodness. Sprinkle on a ton of cinnamon. Grab the spoon and spread the sugar and cinnamon around until it turns a golden brown. Now eat."

"Mum. I could eat this every day!"

"Sweetie, grab me two more slices. Thanks. Load them with butter. Grab the Kraft cheese slices. Plop one or two slices on both slices of bread. Pop them into the oven at high heat. Grab a chair. Watch through the window for the cheese to start bubbling. Great. Let's pull it out. Look at the gooey goodness. Grab the pepper shaker. Shake. Shake. Shake. Be careful it is hot. Delectable!"

"I love you, mommy."

CHICKEN BURGERS



"Sweetie, one last food trick that will equip you well for your entire life."

"What is it, mummy?"

"Grab the box in the freezer, the one with four chicken burgers in it. Great."

"Looks good, mommy."

“Honey, you can get creative with this one.”

“How, mommy? How?”

“Toss a burger or two on the cookie sheet. Slap on a Kraft slice or two. Toast a bun. Lather it in butter + mustard. Load on the pepper. Slice up a tomato. Layer the bun with a tomato. Add crisp bacon if you’d like. A little lettuce. Pull the burgers out of the oven. Place them on the waiting bun. Dollop ketchup on the side. Wella, gourmet! Even add fries if you’d like!”

“Mummy. Mummy. Mummy. McDonald’s. Macaroni. TV Dinners. Toast + Sugar + Butter + Cinnamon + Cheese Slices. Chicken Burgers. I’m set. I will most certainly, make nutritious dining choices throughout my life.

FLASH FORWARD: 1982

“Corrie. I prepared you dinner tonight. Gourmet. Minute steaks + potatoes stuffed with broccoli + cheese. I spent hours drooling, I mean duelling ⁽⁷⁾ in the kitchen. Take a bite! Take a bite! Take a bite!”

“Yum. The steak is chewy, just the way I like it. Sweetie, the potato is cold. Did you bake the potatoes before scooping out the insides?”

“What?”

REBEKAH (MUM)

Mum was an incredible cook, no, chef. Like many a mother, she cared for a large brood with little or no support. Mum was doing her absolute best despite trying circumstances. I, we, were lucky. In no way do I blame her for the survival tools she provided me with. The previous examples are not a reflection of her but a ‘reflection of the times’ for all families without the means to flaunt wealth. Lower middle-class realities. A reality which just might be the fertilizer for perpetuating racism. *Deep. I know.* But, if the struggling factions of society struggle, it becomes abundantly easy to divide the struggling and point at others as the root of their problems.

It’s easy to say, look we know your life is hard, but look over there, those people, the ones who don’t share your pigment, they are coming for your way of life, and if you shun them, you will never fall to the bottom of the heap.

Rebekah kept us alive. She worked assiduously at it. If only I had paid attention ⁽⁸⁾, I would have picked up on her expertise. Mum made world-famous cinnamon buns, the most delectable fried chicken ever. A succulent roast, every Sunday, except for once a month where she’d make a full turkey dinner. Her pies. Oh my. And OMG, butter + lemon tarts to die for!

Every dish she prepared was cookbook worthy. Mum’s life wasn’t easy. But she never

complained. She did often cry because Dad's nightly outbursts were inescapable. He loved her. But he, too, was broken, struggling, and desperately trying to learn how to be a man during confusing, challenging times. I, unfortunately, exacerbated their challenges. Something I will carry with me forever.

1. *Duck. Duck. Duck.* I'm friggen tired of ducking. Quit throwing things at me. Don't you have someone else to harass?
2. Today will be the last time I eat fast food. I'm weak. Today will be the last time I eat fast food. "Cam, do you want to go to the cafeteria?" Yes. Burger + fries? Yes. McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, A & W, Kentucky Fried Chicken? Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Any others? Yes. I don't want to go. I won't go. Pizza? Yes. Being an adult is great. Sugary fries. Yum. I can't eat this anymore. *What, a burger meal is almost free?* How much are vegetables? More \$\$\$? Fast-food it is. *Am I poor?* A little. Well, the choice is being made for me. I, we're, weak. The rich people don't seem to be.
3. Thank you! Finally, larger sizes! **Super!** Is there another option? *Sir, the citizens seem to be getting fatter; it may be our fault. No. It's called freedom. Let's just hope the government doesn't get involved and pretend to care. What, we can no longer offer super-size? That's okay; we had enough time to create "heavy users." Addicts' sir? No, "heavy users." I know. We can't have super-size anymore; let's allow our borderline "heavy users" to fill their own sodas.* Hmm... I don't know why I'm stopping my car, but I need a coke for some reason. Slurp. Funny, I don't even want this. Three miles later, another cola. *Am I a "heavy user" now?*
4. I could eat this almost every day.
5. I'm an adult now, and I'm eating at a place with a clown and a hamburger thief. I'm an adult now? Is thieving, okay?
6. In the future, I will reminisce with a friend suggesting we need to try the comforting Mac + Cheese Whiz. My memories were wrong; Mum made Mac + Real Cheese - Whiz was never part of the recipe; whiz and celery sticks, most definitely, was!
7. No duelling in the kitchen, Drooling, yes.
8. I was always paying attention. In the future, I will host thirty-consecutive Orphan Christmases + several Thanksgivings + barbeques, preparing most of the menus myself. I thank Rebekah for providing me with the tools to do so. The food choices I made lacking nutritional value were my own - they may have been a product of habit and financial means - but like many, fries, or an apple? Guess which one wins most of the time, for many of us? *Apples.*

You suck at guessing.

TV TRAYS: 1968



Sweetie, it is time to teach you—
—how to take care of yourself.
How to eat nutritiously.
Really, mommy!



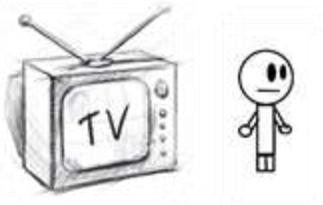
Yes. If you don't eat well—
—your body will start eating itself.
You're scaring me mommy.
CHOMP. CHOMP. CHOMP.



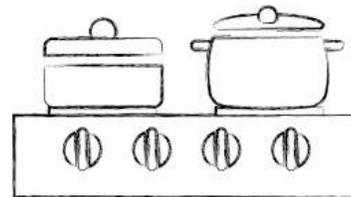
Forget the lesson. Something called—
—McDonald's opened. Let's hop into the Buick.
Burgers. Fries. Soda. Soda. Burgers.
A Clown + a Thief.



I'm tired. TV Tray Time!
No more table. Let's watch TV.
Swanson is in the oven. Foiled dessert
Mountain vistas + flowers. Poor people.



Boy, wiggle the antenna. There.
His dinner is getting cold.
GROSS. SWITCH CHANNELS.
I can't watch this during dinner.



Wednesday Night.
Home made Mac + Cheese.
And a second pot: Mac + Canned tomatoes
Pepper. Pepper. Pepper.

TV TRAYS: 1968



Treat time.
 Wonder Bread. Balls melt in your mouth.
 Cinnamon Toast + Cheese Bread!
 Every day, please!



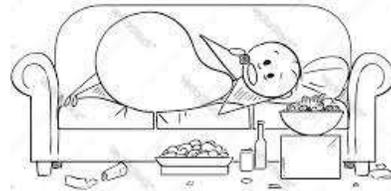
Sweetie, creative time.
 Frozen chicken burgers.
 A slice a tomato. Cheese slices.
 Bacon. Lettuce. Mustard. Ketchup. Yum.



Mom was a chef and pastry expert.
 Cinnamon Buns. Pies. Chicken. Roasts.
 Turkey. Butter + Lemon Tarts.
 Pay attention. Learn. Learn. Learn.



I'm an adult?
 Burgers. Fries. Burgers Fries.
 And Coke. I don't want it. Have another.
 Am I an addict? No, "heavy user."



Money says burger.
 Living says apple.
 Food desert says burger.
 Poverty says: We're all getting fat.

SPAGHETTI
SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN
DECEMBER 18, 1968

The radio blared in dad's new ride, a 1968 royal blue Buick Electra.

The DJ chanted, *"Dress warmly today, my children. We are in a deep freeze, with the thermostat hovering around -23.6 Fahrenheit. If you stay outside for too long, you'll risk freezing your –"*

"Hey Jude, Don't make it bad, take a bad song and make it better."

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Dad needed to show off his shiny wheels around town. James + Donald, + Brian was at school, so he deferred to treating me. So, he took us to an Italian restaurant where we devoured spaghetti with meat sauce.

On the way home, my stomach churned. Motion sickness overwhelmed me. As dad navigated the traffic on the Broadway Bridge and approached the intersection of Five Corners, I barfed my guts out all over the floor mats of the Electra. Dad slammed on the brakes, screeching the car to an untimely halt. Horns blared all around us.

"Get out," he screamed. *"Get out now."* The veins of his forehead pulsed.

Before I could utter a word, the door on my side of the car violently swung open. Dad yanked me from the vehicle, jumped back into the driver's seat and sped away. We lived five miles from Five Corners. I walked home.

On this day, I developed an abhorrence for spaghetti.

MY FATHER'S FAMILY

CALGARY ALBERTA

JULY 1970

For the most part, Dad's family was invisible. We never visited them. They never visited us. The only members of Dad's family, I remember, were Mary & Bill Lupasko, an aunt and uncle. I remember this pair to be sharp and disjointed with twisted minds. They came across as friendly, but their demeanours were brusque + unkind.

The Lupasko's resided in Calgary, close to Bernice + Sadie.

Nicholas told me the Lupasko's bloodline traced back to the Romanian Royal Family, and Nicholas would have been a Duke.

I boasted about this often to classmates, and my boasts were met with brutality.

"Here's what we are going to do. We are going to beat you senseless. Royal family. Sturby Place. Your family is nothing more than gutter trash. What a joke."

Because of space, the Lupasko's took me in on this vacation while the rest of the family stayed with Bernice + Sadie.

I hated Aunt Mary. Aunt Mary donned wing glasses resembling an evil librarian; she chain-smoked Export A cigarettes. Resulting in a scratchy, grave voice. Her eyes were a piercing black.

By the time of this visit, my anti-smoking campaign had worked on Mum. But, Aunt Mary, the fucking devil, dragged Mum into grips of temptation, and Mum would sit alongside Mary, chain-smoking. My heart fibres strained.

"Lindsay, we've set up your bed in the basement. Right next to the furnace, water heater, pantry and Mitten's litter box."

"Auntie, the steps are so steep and narrow – " The steps were nothing more than planks, angled at twenty-five degrees, less than two inches wide, climbing about two feet apart. *" – I'm terrified to go up and down them. I don't want to fall."*

"Don't be a sissy. You will be fine."

I'd slide down on my butt + climb up on my belly. There was no railing.

Aunt Mary relished in my fear. She'd send me down the perilous flight of stairs several times per day to pick up ingredients for dinner. Laughing at me during each trip.

Every night we'd eat out. When we'd returned to their home after dinner, Mary would bark at me to take the dinner ingredients back to the pantry.

PUPPY LOVE

SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

SUTHERLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 1971

In Grade 7, I had fallen madly in love with Kim Benson, an older woman, by five months. Kim was a sophisticated woman who I often saw scarfing down Salt + Vinegar chips; I was still eating ripple.

I never found the courage to engage with her, but not to be deterred, I formulated a fool-proof plan to win her heart. Kim was the big fish of Sutherland Elementary. Beautiful far beyond her years. I planned and planned and planned. I threw my plans out the window when I stumbled across a gold-plated chain with her name inscribed on it. My plan was most certainly gold.

I dropped and performed ten push-ups, flexed my scrawny body in front of the mirror and rehearsed. I shook in anticipation during each rehearsal.

Hello um, Kim, pretty, hair, like, do you wash it?

It's shiny. Do you like doing stuff?

My dad watches Stampede Wrestling on Saturdays and eats sardines.

I fetched you a present... pretty... hair... (I peed a little in my pants).

If we have a cat, we can call it Scooter. You love –

Courage skirted away down the alleyway. It took its muster with it. Defeated, I tossed the chain in a slough in the woods behind Sturby Place. A love never to be fulfilled.

MONEY FIGHTS – YEAR 7

SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

1972

My parents' joint income allowed us to move away from subsidized housing. We were moving on up to the North Side. For \$14,000, they bought a three-bedroom bungalow in Sutherland; we were moving from the grips of poverty to a lower-middle-class neighbourhood east of the University. Sturby Place may have been the wrong side of the tracks, and you would think lower-middle-class would be a climb up society's steep ladder. It wasn't. The right side of the tracks associated with our new home resembled the Rockefellers, whereas; we were still residing on the bottom rungs of poverty.

I was to attend Evan Hardy Collegiate, a school, at the time, stocked full of silver spoons.

LIFE TAUGHT ME A VALUABLE LESSON: Climbing class is a futile experiment.

Dad kept swilling scotch and chain-smoking fags. Unfortunately, I'd still harp on him daily. Eventually, after a lung collapsing, he quit instead of dying.

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A lie.

He still stole moments to smoke in the bathroom. Every time he did, my heart shattered a little more. I hated him for his unbreakable selfishness.

With Nicholas once again on the recovery treadmill, Mum stepped up to the virtual plate and once more became the family's sole breadwinner. Mum was now 58. Dad 68. I was 12.

Little did the family know, Nicholas's failing lung signified the beginning of the end.

The bell rang, and **Round 7, Year 7**, was about to kick into an evil sickening rage.

Dad had ample time for his anger to brew because of his inability to work. After his treatments ended each morning, he sat and stewed, waiting for Mum to return from work so he could unfurl his ire. Dad would bellow. Mum would cry. Dad would fly into an apoplectic fury ending in a threat of violence. Mum would cower in the corner of the kitchen, and Dad would begin smashing himself in the head with his clenched fists.

Brian and I sat ringside.

When Dad finally tired from his appalling nightly performances, Brian would rush to Mum's side to comfort her. Occasionally, Dad would find another gear and begin shouting at Brian, threatening to punish him.

“STOP IT. STOP IT. STOP IT.”

I'd scream at the top of my lungs.

GUILT entered the fray, firing its two cents into the battle; Lindsay, *you are responsible for this; there would be no financial burden without you. Without you, the weight of financial stress would lift.*

I sat next to Donald at the kitchen table. Donald came home for a short visit; dad was percolating a foul mood—about money. I glanced to my left to witness a steak knife blasting through the air. The knife sliced the air passing Donald's left ear by mere inches—slamming into the wall, sticking the blade vibrating like a tuning fork.

I laughed. I don't know why.

My father's shortcomings were on full display for me to drink in—*what's the opposite of a role model?*

His shortcomings overflowed with insecurity, lacked empathy, dripped victimhood, and were draped in an ugly ruthlessness.

LESSON 2: Never mind.

Could someone please pay attention...to me?

“HEY, LOOK AT ME.”

I needed to escape from the toxic nightly turmoil. I needed to avoid being an unwilling participant in the fights. Sports became my freedom. I wanted to live up to Don. I wanted a taste of what it was like to be a golden child. Intuitively, other than the knife event, I knew Dad worshipped Don and golden for me was nothing more than a fantasy.

First, I pursued baseball. I excelled. I became an All-Star Second Baseman on a City Championship Team. I would look up into the stands; my family was always vacant.

I'd beam with joy when I returned home from games. Nobody appeared to care.

WHO IS LINDSAY WINCHERAUK?

Lindsay Wincherauk is a fearless writer. He has published two books and has had more than eighteen OPEDs appear in major commuter newspapers. Lindsay wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His father (who wasn't his father) worked as a mechanic. His mother (who wasn't his mother) worked as an excellent chef in a diner. In fact, his birth was in a secret place where |society deemed| unfit mothers were sent to give birth in isolation – shading families from shame. If the babies survived being born, usually, they were sold to wealthy Americans or adopted out to farm families.

Lindsay's life began with a lie.

Despite Lindsay's perilous beginnings, starting with deception, Lindsay knew no better and went through life excelling at things, usually in two-year stints. Be that athletics (hall of fame, record holding, one-eyed quarterback), scholastically, career-wise (generating more than \$70 million in revenue for one company), socially, + without question: creatively!

Lindsay's challenging beginning instilled in Lindsay heaping doses of compassion and empathy. Lindsay's life starting out as a lie gave him a keen sense to spot BS from miles away. It also provided him with a dry sense of humour and an understanding those born with silver spoons in their mouths will never be self-aware enough to understand (or admit) their good fortune.

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During Lindsay's work career, he was well-liked by all coworkers. Lindsay was also well respected by his diverse collection of clients, developing several fantastic friendships, primarily because Lindsay is known for his unflinching integrity and ability to hold conversations on most topics.

Lindsay's life mantra is:

The most valuable part of life is the fabulous people we meet during our journeys. If you treat people with respect (leaving judgment at the door), and more importantly, by opening doors for those less fortunate or who can't speak up for themselves, you are living a good, compassionate life. Making money at all costs is not the only thing mattering. Life can be difficult + devastatingly unfair.

Lindsay believes sharing vulnerability is what makes us human. Lindsay will never shy away from being honest about his pain.

Lindsay also believes we must stand up for ourselves, + more importantly, for those who are too burdened by the injustices of life, they can't find the strength to stand up for themselves.

Some things Lindsay is most proud of are when:

- A sixty-year-old employee of his, who had entered a point of life where life had become more struggle than joy (it happens to all of us as we age), said to Lindsay, *“I must thank you. I’ve listened to how you treat people, + by listening, I’ve learned so much about compassion and patience. Thank you. I consider you a great friend.”*
- Another employee who was struggling with addiction thanked Lindsay for his kindness, presenting Lindsay with a Christmas card from him and his girlfriend. Tucked inside the card: lottery tickets.

LINDSAY WINCHERAUK, compassionate, empathetic, well-read, kind, blessed with unflinching integrity, humour in balance, loved by coworkers + friends alike.

Lindsay will always stick up for the underdog. Lindsay understands there are countless older people suffering job loss because COVID gave some companies an opportunity to – Lindsay thinks it is essential to draw attention to this life-threatening issue by being the voice for those too broken to speak up for themselves.

427 Lindsay is currently pitching four manuscripts to publishers and literary agencies. One of the manuscripts (he can’t talk about) will blow the roof off the predatory practices of – Lindsay is writing relentlessly and is also pitching OPEDs and short stories, fiction, + non to literary magazines around the globe.

Lindsay has appeared on Breakfast Television, radio programs in Montreal, + several others in the Vancouver area. Lindsay has also been a featured guest on CKNW + CBC, both on several occasions. And Lindsay was a vital witness of a Hate Crime. This led to the first Hate Crime conviction in Canadian legal history, resulting in him being a speaker at an Enough is Enough Rally (anti-violence rally) with dignitaries, politicians, law enforcement, and community leaders in front of a crowd of approximately five thousand.

Lindsay was the **#1 MIXED-TAPE DJ** at the **UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN** for most of the nineteen-eighties, a fact bringing him joy.

Lindsay resides in Vancouver.
