

LINDSAY WINCHERAUK



ON THE SLUSH PILE

**MY SISTER IS
MY MUM**

A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE ADOPTED
A LOT OF PEOPLE MAKE ADOPTED

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.

ABOUT A BOY



A boy is born in a secret place. A dark place. A sad place.
His Mother is his Sister. Making her his Sister + his Mother.

His Father is his Grandfather.

His Grandmother is just his Grandmother.

His Brothers used to be just Brothers. But then it is discovered they might be Uncles as well.

That turned them into Brunkles.

His Sisters used to be just Sisters. But then it is discovered they might be Aunts as well.

That turned them into Sisaunts.

The boy is never meant to know the truth because his birth brings with it, shame.

How could any of them be, okay?

Especially, the boy and his Grandmother?

SQUARE PEGS. ROUND HOLES.
2007 BE BEE? BOUND HOLES?



A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE ADOPTED
A LOT OF PEOPLE MAKE ADOPTED

2004 + 2005

(WITH TWO FLASH FORWARDS TO 2006)

A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE ADOPTED

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VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA

DECEMBER 2004

When you are the main character in a twisted story, it is impossible to avoid the well-meaning opinions of others. ⁽⁹⁰⁾

It's okay to remain silent. I, we don't want to hear your bullshit, or unsolicited advice. Seriously.

Let me clarify: JUST LISTEN if someone is going through a tumultuous time.

If you choose to diminish with your not-so-subtle SHUT UPS, don't.

Your parents died in a car crash. Lots of people die in car accidents.

FUCK OFF.

My story highlighted why listening without offering an opinion is vital. I don't want to wear my heart on my sleeve, but I need to talk. I don't want to appear weak; however, I've been reduced to a shaking near-suicidal mess at times.

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Life can be fucking hard to come to terms with. I want to keep it private; yet, survival depends on dealing with, then coping with that said life.

Do you go home for Christmas?

A fair question, I no longer know how to answer.

Revealing leads to judgment.

If I answer vaguely, I find solitude.

If I reveal, solitude is often around the corner because *most* don't react. I risk becoming labelled: "*He's got baggage.*"

I don't expect anyone to understand.

I'd often be asked to tell my story.

"On March 3 – that's my life to date."

Most times, at the story's end, opinions would begin to flow, unsolicited.

It wasn't acceptable to be a single mother during those times

A lot of people were adopted.

The people who raised you were your parents.

Other people have it worse.

Paul was adopted, and you guys should talk.

You watched your parents die? They came back to life; you're weird.

And the Crème de le Crème coming far in the future from a co-worker named Kyle ⁽⁹¹⁾ when I vented about the catalogue of challenges, I've dealt with without missing a single day of work.

A lot of people have issues, Lindsay.

Why don't you just tell me to SHUT UP? It would be less offensive. Asshole.

I kid you not. Opinions of others have become my reality. I wish I were embellishing. I'm not.

It is the unfortunate gift of my story.

It may be fortunate. It's inspired me to write about it screaming:

HEY PEOPLE: IF YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO'VE GONE THROUGH A WHACK OF TRAUMA, IT'S OKAY TO LISTEN SILENTLY. THAT IS ALL THEY LIKELY WANT – IF YOU CAN'T, ONLY LISTEN: WHY ARE YOU PRETENDING TO BE A FRIEND?

Regardless of the pitfalls of my story, I think it is imperative, I tell it.

My realities made me grow silent when I needed to speak the most.

Sad, when I desperately needed a hug.

Comments without thought stifled me. They've made me ashamed of my reality. They've diminished me. For the most part, they are mean.

I wasn't adopted, yet: *Many people were adopted*, which has become typical rhetoric.

My parents didn't raise me.

The people who raised you were your parents.

No, they were not. Love was never present.

It wasn't acceptable to be a single mother at the time.

How could saying that possibly be comforting?

My struggle taught me a valuable lesson: Don't diminish others, remain silent, listen, and realize understanding may not be part of the equation, and your ears may provide all the comfort needed.

CHRISTMAS CARD

7 DECEMBER 2004

Once upon a time, I owned a red convertible. The top was down when the sun was out, regardless of the temperature. So, if you rode upfront with me, you remained toasty warm. If you rode in the back, we'd chip you from the back seat when we arrived at our destination.

Before ownership, I never noticed red convertibles. The day I drove it off the lot, they were everywhere.

What does my car have to do with Christmas?

This Christmas Season was the first where Bernice knew I knew the truth. It was my second Christmas dealing with the pain. The first came close to being my last.

Last year, when I received my annual card of obligation, it took on a different meaning: when it was from a sister, oh well. Now that the cards came from a knowing mother, I can't find the words to describe the feeling.

I sat at my desk writing this story with my TV providing background noise. Gwyneth Paltrow was on a talk show. She talked about the incredible bond she has with her mother, glowing when mentioning how much they love one another; *she said that without her mother, life would be empty.*

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Later that night, I flicked on the tube again, stopping on a crime show. The plotline involved a son seeking revenge on anyone that has done his mother wrong.

My friends and acquaintances began their holiday travels. Many of them were stressed out. Most of them have somewhere they belong.

I travelled to a dark place. The happiness of others added to my sorrows. I felt guilty for those feelings, punishing myself. I put on a brave face, feeling like an outsider; my anger disgusted me.

Most holidays take on different meanings: especially Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Birthdays.

The bond between mother and son, father and son, the importance of the first five years of life –

Every so often, a sad story was inserted displaying the tragic consequences created when the bond never forms.

I WANT TO SCREAM

Holidays make me hypersensitive. They are my red convertible; I flip the channel,

A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE ADOPTED

another convertible.

For children devoid of the bond: these days are constant reminders of the lost love.

If we fail to find the strength to rise above the cards dealt our way, we risk repeating the cycle repeatedly.

I found this portion of the book incredibly difficult to write.

I know I'm better off than if my mother raised me. I don't want to complain too much. I don't want to blame anyone for anything, even though I may be entitled to—I like my life. I hate parts of it.

As much as what happened in the past is wrong, I wouldn't change it, not a single thing.

I am full of flaws and insecurities. I've made numerous mistakes. I may have to repair some fences. I know I'm a good man.

On December 7, I received my card from my ~~sister~~ mother:



Knowing the truth changed the meaning of the message. When it came from a sister, I could shrug it off. Being that it was from Mum, I cried.

Is she trying to punish me crossed my mind?

I was expecting an acknowledgement of the truth; it never came. The card devastated me; I felt isolated. I reached out to Wayne and Fiona.

As for others:

You're better off without her. If I, were you, I'd phone her and confront her – Your parents that raised you are – Are you going home for Christmas? If I were you—if I, was you—if I, were you; he's got baggage –

I remained silent.

The card always comes with a gift. I don't care about presents.

When I was growing up, the charade was in full flow. The gifts from my sister's mum offered comedy-filled moments amongst friends. When other kids were receiving stereos, clothes, cameras, games, athletic gear –

Lindsay, what did you get from your sister this year? Tell me. Tell me. Yeah, I got a camera and hockey equipment. Sure, it's nice. We are talking about you now. What did you get?

One year, she gave me a cassette tape of the soundtrack of the movie Xanadu.

The next: a vest in a kaleidoscope of colours so abstract that the clerk began laughing when I returned it to the Department Store where she bought it.

The list goes on.

- "The 100 Year History of the Calgary Fire Department" (a book).
- Six consecutive years of shirts with wildlife on them: a bear, squirrel, chipmunk, fox, a bear chasing a chipmunk up a tree on the arm, and finally, a duck.

I became proficient at faking excitement.

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"Wow! I didn't know the Deerfoot Mall caught on fire during construction."

At least she gave you a gift.

Thanks for opening your mouth.

You may think I'm bitter. My mother and sister treated me like I was nothing more than an obligation. With me in her life, she had to pretend. Guilt seemed to have a reverse effect.

Lindsay, I'd hire Brian. He'd be more reliable.

I turned on the TV and talked about the importance of mothers being the primary caregiver to ensure a happy life.

I turned silent again.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wayne & Fiona stopped by early Christmas afternoon to ensure I was doing okay. I waited for them before opening my gift. I have lived 26 years on my own.

PRESENTS DON'T MATTER

I tore off the wrapping, throwing it to the floor.

A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE ADOPTED

A TEA TOWEL

I wish I were lying; an emotionless card and a tea towel were this year's gift from ~~my~~
~~brother~~ (uncle), ~~sister~~ (aunt), ~~sister~~ (mother), and a dog.

The thought doesn't count.

Love counts.

Wayne and Fiona hugged me.

A mother is supposed to love her child. A mother is supposed to take care of her child. A mother is supposed to fight and protect her child. A mother is supposed to hold her child. A mother is supposed to let her child know they are loved.

90. Condescending.

91. Why did you use his name? (~~Because he was supposed to be a friend~~). You don't believe that.

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.

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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.