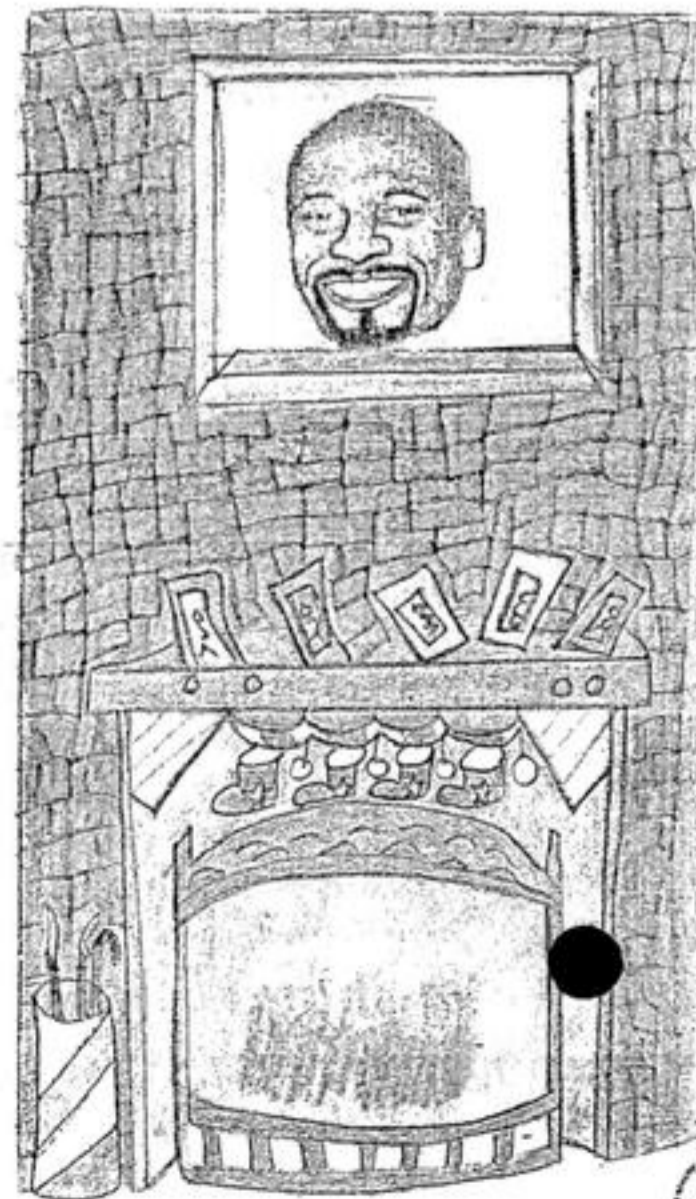


Trouble With Home



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Trouble with home

When the line of communication is broken at home, you should always seek ways in which to repair that communication, verses getting angry over it.

Backpack Pals: Featuring Stuffi Complex
Trouble with Home

"I don't like my mom because she doesn't like me."

The sun was teetering teasingly high with a blanket of warmth at about 9:00 O'clock on Saturday morning. Most of the children and their parents in the Ball Brackett neighborhood of Massachusetts, north of Boston, were engaged in an annual softball tournament that lasted the whole weekend, which was fine by Stuffi Complex because that meant no chores for her.

But for a small few, things never panned out the way they hoped for and a hint of misery always seemed to linger in their life a little too long, no matter what they did to try to get rid of it. Some days were worse than others. This day would shape to be worse for young Youngme Hogshead.

Youngme had done all he could to fulfill his moms commanding wishes but it was never enough for his mom. She was an embarrassing drunk that sank Youngme's heart to the brink of lost hope and despair.

Stuffi Complex, donning her black softball uniform with the gold trim, leaped out of her dad's car in front of her house. Her mom had forgotten a pan of potato salad at the house and swears everyone will want to taste it and since the game hadn't began yet, Stuffi volunteered to ride back with her dad and pick it up, when she noticed someone sitting by the tree on the curb in front of Beanie Brown's house two houses over.

Stuffi knew it couldn't be her best friend because Stuffi left her at the park watching over the cookies Stuffi helped her mom bake the night before.

"Stuffi, honey, what...where are you going?" shouted her dad, carrying the pan of potato salad to the car.

"I'll be right back in a sec' dad." Stuffi waved back at here dad as she jogged down two houses to Beanie's house. Stuffi knew everyone in the neighborhood would be at Ball Brackett Park, on this spring morning. She wondered who could be sitting in front of Beanie's house as she approached.

"What are you doing out here?" asked Stuffi stepping on the other side of the tree.

"I hate my mom," said Youngme.

Stuffi could tell he was crying. She could hear it in his voice. She fully rounded the tree where he sat on the curb and discovered Youngme with his head down and not wearing a shirt. Stuffi immediately covered her mouth when she saw the scratches on his back. Her dad had pulled up and saw the young boy with his arms wrapped around his closed legs and his head pressed against his knees but what he noticed the most was the terrified look on his daughters face.

It took some doing to rile the nine-year-old Stuffi Complex and this seemed to be on that level. Stuffi's dad threw his car in park, pushed open the door then jumped out and raced up to her. "What's going on Stuffi, is everything alright?" he asked as he approached, looking down at Youngme.

"Dad, I think we need to get him to a hospital."

"I don't need to go to no stupid hospital they hate me too."

"Youngme!"

The loud thunderous voice jolted the boy into hopping up and immediately racing off down the street. Stuffi and her dad turned to see a woman walking toward them, wearing a checkered pink and white house robe, pink slippers, with rollers in her hair and a beer can in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

"You get your butt back here right now Youngme Hogshead before I skin your hide. You keep up with your running and I'm just going to have to keep chasin'", shouted the thin sickly looking woman with the chronic cough.

"Hold on miss. What's going on?" Stuffi's dad threw his arm out in front of the woman blocking her way.

The woman glanced up at him, trying to see around him. "What's goin' on mister is my business not yours. If you want to start somethin' I'll go get my husband to kick your..."

Stuffi's dad covered the woman's mouth before she could say another word but when she started coughing, he yanked his hand away and shook it off, pulled out a hanker chief then wiped it off with a frown on his face. Stuffi turned and watched Youngme as he raced down the street.

"I would ask that you watch your tone..."

"And I would ask you to get the hell out of my way but I aint. Move." She brushed passed Stuffi and her dad, moseyed down the street pounding her chest as she leaned forward coughing violently.

"What was that all about Stuffi?"

"I'm not sure dad but I think a little help is in order."

"Do you know that woman, Stuffi?"

Not really but I know Youngme..."

"Young what?"

"The kid, Youngme Hogshead. He lives a couple of blocks over with his mom."

"Was that his mom?"

"Uh, yeah dad. I hardly think she'd be yelling after him if she wasn't."

"Where is the kid's dad?"

"Oh, Mr. Hogshead doesn't live with Youngme and his mom. I don't know where he lives but not with them but I hear there's trouble at that house."

"Well, I should say so." Stuffi's dad scratched his head.

"Dad, that's nasty. Mrs. Hogshead coughed in your hand now you're scratching your head with it. Isn't that how germs are spread?"

Stuffi's dad snatched his hand away then looked at it. "Yes. You are absolutely right Stuffi. I should know better."

"I think you should wash your hands before we go back to the park dad."

"Yes dear."

Stuffi went back to the house and washed her hands when her dad washed his.

"Dad, will you help?"

"I'm sorry, help with what honey?"

"You know, with that kid, Youngme and his mom. I think they need someone to talk to them so they don't have to fight anymore."

"Sure Stuffi, honey. If I can, I sure will."

"Thanks dad. You're the greatest. Well, we better get going. I'm sure mom is wondering what's taking us so long."