

Darla Monica

By Sheila Naranja

Chapter 4: Compassion

As Brad Yayger mulled over the Canine Lady's lack of compassion for her own children, he realized that this was an extension of her absence of self-compassion. This became evident when she had no qualms about suffering at the hands of her own mother as a child. At a court hearing, she made an allusion to Brad's unwillingness to bring children into a cruel and brutal environment. She twisted his compassionate reluctance into the false notion that he did not want the children. Perhaps there was a secret ambition on her part to separate him from the bambinos. That is precisely what she ultimately did.

One of the incidents that was used to discontinue visitation was an emotional time when Brad had been stressed out with the whole visitation regime. He began crying during a visitation session. This was twisted into a bogus idea that he was mentally unstable. It actually demonstrated a sense of groundedness that was put off balance by the absurdity and cruelty of the situation. It takes an absence of compassion to twist such sensitivity into mental illness.

Later in life, Brad would reflect on the whole experience as an excellent example of why adult remedial education was very much needed in the society of the time. His own life experiences and his talents for solving problems would serve as beacons of rationality in an insane world where the upside-down dominate. It put him through a living hell that he would never wish for his worst enemy.

Frank emerged from the server room to greet Carry Grant in the conference room. The look on his face was grim and severe. "We haven't seen anything like this outside of a hacker attack. It was clearly an intentional case of industrial sabotage. An O.S. engineer has taken a look at the patch and found pieces of instruction-modifying code. We may have to re-install the entire O.S. in order to get things running again. That is the current plan. The good news is that you are not actually needed here. Feel free to watch over our shoulders, but it will probably be a deadly dull day." This was music to Carry's ears.

It has been said that if an experience does not kill you, it will make you stronger. This is how Brad emerged from his experience at the hand of Canine viciousness. It left him a stronger, more mindful person who could endure in the face of great adversity. It also increased the quality of his wisdom school work. Students observed the way he learned and grew through the events of the time and came to see the silver lining in the dark cloud of the break-up. His later work as a peer supporter for voice-hearers and people with other difficult conditions, also benefitted from his survival through the Canine hell. He came to see it as yet another immersive experience leading to the next level of initiation.

Brad's first significant immersion occurred when he was only thirteen years old. He and his brothers ventured out to a sandbar in the midst of high waves on Lake Erie. The waves were caused by severe weather during a family vacation on the lake. They had to pass through a deep slough on the way there and back. For Brad, it was like a brush with death. The fury of the waves tried Brad's swimming abilities like nothing before. He imagined the worst case scenario of being dragged along in the water to a point where a riptide would have drowned him.

When he and his brothers returned to the family cabin, they dried off before getting to sleep. Brad often recalled the way he saw the huge swells upon closing his eyes. It left him with far more compassion for others than he had before the immersion. He graduated from his bullying ways.

Greta Garbo hung up her phone after hearing the prognosis from Carry. She was off the hook since Carry was not vital to the firefight at Stow Rage. She also felt that her own suspicions about Orbuncle were spot on. They were the culprits behind a viral patch that trashed an auxiliary server. Frank had filled Carry in on how the code-damaging parts of the patch came from Orbuncle. They were clearly not only a pimple on the butt of Fun Macro, but the entire computer industry. She reflected on the time spent researching Ralph Elysian, their Super Anus. It was all too true that the cult of Elysian was a blight on the industry and humanity itself. There is no surprise in the ties between Elysian and the Naval Misfits, but that is fodder for a completely different framework.

Brad decided to leave his car at home in order to see how the carpool ride-sharing worked in Oakland. As he strolled toward Lake Merritt through Trestle Glen, a few commuters asked him if he was headed for S.F. His reply was semi-honest. He was headed for the carpool pick-up spot first, then for S.F. They were trying to bypass the pick-up queue by finding an extra passenger on the way there. In order to get legal access to the H.O.V. (high-occupancy vehicle) lane with all of its perquisites, each car needed at least three people in it.

Brad enjoyed the ride into the City with its exploratory banter and discussion of all things educational. The driver did not appreciate public education. She blamed it for her child's poor performance and being "dumb as a newel post." Brad made a mental note to look up the expression in order to look up its meaning. He had never heard it before. As the product of an excellent public education system, he could not agree with her. They had to agree to disagree. Brad was too courteous to argue. He merely chalked up the whole experience as yet another reason for the existence of the Sophie Communications Department.