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“Nerd!”

“Heh, heh! Loser!”

Justin stepped off the school bus and trudged along the side of the road. He stared hard at the dirt and pebbles that tumbled underneath him. He watched the dust swirl around his feet as he walked, the tiny stones dancing and bouncing off the tips of his sneakers. Concentrating, his head bowed low and his eyes fixed on the ground, he was still unable to block out the shouts from the bus’s windows as the vehicle revved its engine.

“Geek!”

“Weirdo!”

Someone threw a ripened banana peel out of one of the windows. It landed on a patch of gravel in front of him.

“Don’t slip!” someone yelled.

Just as Justin stepped over the slimy black and yellow peel, someone tossed an empty milk carton out of a window and hurled grapes that bounced off the small of his back.

“Why don’t you go back to the planet you came from, you alien spaceoid extraterrestrial freakazoid!” A chorus of cackling erupted after the final shout out, and gradually disappeared behind the roar of the engine as the school bus pulled away.

He cradled his upper body in his arms and quickened his pace. With his long thin fingers he could feel how bony his elbows were. He could picture the kids on the bus studying the angles of his narrow face and his long chin. His ears were too big and his nose was long and pointy. His eyes were beady and hidden behind wire-framed glasses. He felt that he must have been some sight, much like the bearded fat lady or tap-dancing Siamese twins at a carnival freak show. The difference was that while those people welcomed an ogling crowd, all Justin wanted was to be invisible. At the very least he wanted to blend into the scenery like the stones and dirt he shuffled with his feet on his way home.

“书呆子！”

“嘿嘿！失败者！”

贾斯汀走下校车，沿着路边吃力地走着。他死死盯着在他身下翻滚的泥土和鹅卵石。走路时，他看着尘土在他脚边盘旋，细小的石头在他的运动鞋鞋尖上跳舞弹跳。凝神凝神，低着头，眼睛盯着地面，依旧无法阻挡车窗外传来的呼喊声，车子发动了引擎。

“极客！”

“怪人！”

有人从其中一扇窗户扔出成熟的香蕉皮。它降落在一块砾石上他的面前。

“别滑倒！”有人喊道。

就在贾斯汀跨过粘乎乎的黑黄色果皮时，有人从窗外扔出一个空牛奶盒，葡萄从他的腰部弹回。

“你为什么不回到你来自的星球，你这个 alien spaceoid extraterrestrial freakazoid！”最后一声呐喊后，一阵咯咯的笑声响起，随着校车的驶离，渐渐消失在引擎的轰鸣声中。他将上半身抱在怀里，加快了脚步。他用细长的手指可以感觉到他的手肘有多骨感。他可以想象公共汽车上的孩子们正在研究他的窄脸和长下巴的角度。他的耳朵太大，鼻子又长又尖。他的眼睛圆圆的，藏在金属丝框眼镜后面。他觉得自己一定是个风景，很像狂欢节怪胎秀上留着胡子的胖女人或跳踢踏舞的连体双胞胎。不同的是，虽然那些人欢迎一群抛媚眼的人，但贾斯汀想要的只是隐身。最起码，他想融入风景，就像他在回家的路上用脚踩过的石头和泥土。

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It was night, and Justin crawled into bed. He pulled an afghan first over his long chin and tiny mouth, then over his big nose, and finally over his small eyes. A hint of light broke through some woven holes in the blanket over his head. He wanted it to be darker, but he was too exhausted to walk outside his bedroom to pull the hallway night light out of its socket. He couldn't even muster the energy to just inch his way over to his bedroom door and close it. He squeezed his eyes shut trying to make his world as black and motionless as he possibly could, and waited for everything to disappear. Everything: the toys scattered about all over the floor, like an old, chocolate milk-stained Elmo and a box of Lego Space Police, all of which he had long outgrown but couldn't work up the energy to get rid of; the pile of astronomy and entomology books that had once fascinated him, but that lay untouched and unexplored for months; the sadness that blinded him every morning he rode the bus to school, and the pain that gripped him every afternoon as he walked the locker-lined halls.

Why couldn't every moment in his life be as quiet and peaceful as when he nestled in the soft comfort of his bed? How could life be so gentle and sweet during the long hours of the night, only to be rattled and shaken when the sunlight streamed through a cluster of high clouds and the first teases and taunts shot through the chilly morning air?

夜深了，贾斯汀爬上了床。他先用一件阿富汗毛衣盖住他的长下巴和小嘴，然后盖住他的大鼻子，最后盖住他的小眼睛。一丝光亮从他头上的毯子上的一些编织孔中透出。他想让它更暗一些，但他太累了，无法走出卧室，把走廊上的夜灯从插座上拔下来。他甚至没有力气慢慢走到卧室门前关上门。他紧闭双眼，尽可能让自己的世界变得黑暗而静止，等待一切消失。一切：玩具散落一地，像是沾满巧克力牛奶的老旧埃尔莫和一盒乐高太空警察，所有这些他早就不适合了，但又没力气扔掉；那堆天文学和昆虫学的书曾经让他着迷，但几个月来都没有动过，也没有人去探索；每天早上他乘公共汽车去学校时，悲伤使他双目失明，每天下午他走在储物柜两旁的大厅时，痛苦也笼罩着他。为什么他生命中的每一刻都不能像他躺在柔软舒适的床上时那样安静祥和？在漫长的夜晚，生活怎么会如此温柔甜蜜，只有当阳光穿过一簇高高的云层，第一声戏弄和嘲讽从寒冷的早晨空气中射出时，才会嘎嘎作响和摇晃？

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He just didn't know.

Why did they make him their bulls-eye target? Why did they choose him over... say... Douglas, the kid at the bus stop after Justin's whose forehead was huge and whose eyebrows met over the bridge of his nose? Or... Judy, the girl four lockers down from him with the two huge, yellowish buck teeth who carried a pet frog wherever she went? Weren't kids like these more deserving of the mockery and scorn that Justin fell prey to day after wearisome day?

He just didn't know.

What he did know was that he would enjoy his time alone for as long as it was able to last. He would push one big floppy ear hard into his pillow and, keeping the afghan pulled tightly over his little eyes and sizable nose, he would drift off to sleep.

Or not. Too many thoughts were racing through his head. Was there ever a time in his life when he was... happy?

His mother told him stories about when he was a baby, born with a full head of jet black hair. Apparently, on occasion he would lie in his crib, tug hard on his hair, and cry loudly from the pain. It was possible that he threw similar tantrums before he was born, when he was too clueless to realize that no one could hear him because he was in a fluid-filled sack under layers of flesh. He wondered if unseen forces were bullying him as early as in the womb and in the cradle.

And there was Justin's older brother, with his obvious enjoyment of inflicting fear and pain on Justin in the games they would play as children. He used to tie Justin up in his own dirty socks, throw him into his bedroom closet, say in a fake British accent, "Time to check me fudge," and then leave Justin to free himself in a Houdini-esque fashion. Occasionally, hours later, their mother would notice that Justin had not shown up for dinner and she would search for him, only to find Justin writhing on the floor and salivating and chewing on a pilled sock wrapped tightly around his wrists.

Perhaps it was the 105o fever Justin's brother had one night as an infant that caused severe, damage to the loving, compassionate section of his brain. Perhaps it was the hard impact of his brother's head against the floor when he was a baby and fell out of his high chair. Perhaps it was the smashing of his face against a bedpost as a toddler while trying to find his way through his darkened bedroom that jiggled something critical to his ability to resist picking on those much smaller than him. Perhaps it was the laryngitis he had at the time of his bar mitzvah that prevented the good Lord from being able to hear what he had to say that evening, and that resulted in the denial of his rite of passage into mature adulthood.

Perhaps it really didn't matter.

他只是不知道。

他们为什么把他当作靶心目标？他们为什么选择他而不是……比如说……道格拉斯，那个在贾斯汀后面的公共汽车站的孩子，他的额头很大，眉毛在他的鼻梁上相交？或者... 朱蒂，那个长着两颗巨大的淡黄色龅牙，无论走到哪里都带着一只宠物青蛙的女孩？像这样的孩子不是更应该受到贾斯汀日复一日的嘲笑和蔑视吗？

他只是不知道。

他所知道的是，只要时间能够持续下去，他就会享受独处的时光。他会把一只松软的大耳朵用力塞进枕头里，然后用毛毯紧紧地捂住他的小眼睛和大鼻子，然后他就会渐渐睡着。

或不。太多的念头在他脑海中飞驰。他一生中有过……快乐的时候吗？

他的母亲给他讲过他小时候的故事，他出生时有一头乌黑的头发。显然，有时他会躺在婴儿床上，用力拽头发，痛得大声哭泣。有可能他在出生前就发过类似的脾气，当时他太无知了，没有意识到没有人能听到他的声音，因为他是在一个充满液体的袋子里，下面是一层层的肉。他想知道是否早在子宫和摇篮中就有看不见的力量在欺负他。

还有贾斯汀的哥哥，他显然很享受在他们小时候玩的游戏给贾斯汀带来恐惧和痛苦。他过去常常用自己的脏袜子把贾斯汀绑起来，把他扔进卧室的壁橱里，用假的英国口音说，“是时候检查我的软糖了”，然后让贾斯汀以胡迪尼式的方式自由自在。偶尔，几个小时后，他们的母亲会注意到贾斯汀没有出现吃晚饭，于是她会寻找他，却发现贾斯汀在地板上扭来扭去，流口水，嚼着一只紧紧缠在手腕上的起球袜子。

也许是贾斯汀的弟弟在婴儿时期发烧了 105 度，这对他大脑中充满爱心、富有同情心的部分造成了严重的伤害。也许是他弟弟小时候从高脚椅上掉下来时，头撞在地板上的强烈撞击。也许是他蹒跚学步时试图在黑暗的卧室里寻找出路时把脸撞在床柱上，这让他有能力拒绝挑剔比他小得多的人，这对他来说至关重要。也许是在成人礼时患上了喉炎，这让好心的上帝无法听到他那天晚上要说的话，这导致他的成年仪式被拒绝。也许这真的无关紧要。

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Brother or no brother, Justin never found himself at a loss for sadistic evil souls bent on draining every ounce of pride and confidence from Justin's being. Every week. Every day. Sometimes two or three times a day.

Justin tossed in one direction as the words "why don't you go back to the planet you came from" echoed in his oversized ears.

He tossed in another direction as the word "extraterrestrial" buzzed in his overactive mind. "Alien," he whispered, shoving his head far underneath his pillow.

"Freakazoid," he grumbled, pounding his fists on his mattress.

"Go back to the planet you..." His voice trailed off as exhaustion finally led him into a deep sleep.

Chills raced through his body and jostled him awake. It was almost as though he had fallen asleep in a tent at a campground moistened by a fine mist and cooled by late autumn breezes. But he was not out camping. He was sleeping in his soft bed, his head lost in a fluffy pillow, his face covered with an afghan. He folded his blanket down away from his eyes, expecting to see the dark outline of his bedpost, and the silhouette of his partly opened bedroom door against the dimly lit hallway wall.

不管是不是兄弟，贾斯汀从来没有发现自己对那些一心想榨干贾斯汀生命中每一丝骄傲和自信的虐待狂邪恶灵魂感到茫然。每周。每天。有时一天两三次。

贾斯汀朝一个方向扔去，“你为什么不回到你来自的星球”这句话在他超大的耳朵里回荡。

当“外星人”这个词在他过于活跃的脑海中嗡嗡作响时，他朝另一个方向扔去。“外星人，”他低声说，把头深深地埋在枕头底下。

“Freakazoid，”他抱怨道，用拳头敲打着床垫。

“回星球去，你……”他的声音渐渐小了下去，疲惫终于让他沉沉睡去。

寒意在他的身体里蔓延，把他推醒。就好像他在营地的帐篷里睡着了，帐篷里被细雾润湿，深秋的微风吹得凉爽。但他并没有出去露营。他睡在柔软的床上，脑袋埋在松软的枕头里，脸上盖着阿富汗面巾。他把毯子叠起来，挡住眼睛，希望能看到他床柱的黑色轮廓，以及他半开着的卧室门映衬在光线昏暗的走廊墙上的轮廓。

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But what was this?

A tree in the distance?

Sand?

Ocean?

Justin squinted. It had to be his bedroom wall that for some reason looked like a... He squinted again. Like a... Huh? Where was his bedroom wall? Where was his bedroom ceiling? Actually, come to think of it... where were his bed and his room?

About all that looked familiar were the few flickering stars in the dark vastness of the midnight sky. It was still night time, and he was still covered by his hand-knitted afghan. Yet in place of his plush pillow and soft bed was a sandy beach. His bedpost was now a swaying, coconut-bearing palm tree, and the hall light had been replaced by a pale half moon.

Was this a joke? Would someone actually go to such lengths as to take him from the safety of his nightly cocoon and dump him in the middle of... nowhere? Or was he somewhere? Where was he, exactly?

He stood up from the patch of sand he had been lying on and brushed some loose grains off of his pajama bottoms. The sand was cool and dry, and it slipped off of the fabric easily. A chilly breeze tousled his hair and formed little goose bumps on his skin. Justin rubbed his upper arms, trying to warm them, but shivers continued to go down his spine. He was scared, and confused. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he looked around some more. It seemed like he was on some kind of a tropical island. The sand, palm trees, and sparkling ocean water in the far distance were definitely a far cry from the small New England town in which he had fallen asleep. In fact, it was a far cry from anything Justin had ever seen before. The closest he had ever come to strolling on a beach was the one time he and his family visited Grandma Fanny in Florida. Any beach strolls, though, were cut short by a trip to the local emergency room for Great Uncle Herman's chest pains that turned out to be gas.

In the distance, Justin could see a dark shadow moving under the branches of a moonlit palm. It seemed to be a kind of animal. Its head was large and smooth and oval, perched on top of a long neck extending into a narrow body. Its torso was at the center of two spindly arms and two very long and thin legs. The creature was simply standing motionless at the base of the tree, with its pointy shoulders hunched forward, its arms draped flat against its body. If any human quality at all could describe this creature, Justin thought it would be “sad.” It appeared almost pitiful.

但这是什么？
远处的一棵树？
沙？
海洋？

贾斯汀眯起眼睛。一定是他卧室的墙壁不知为何看起来像……他眯起眼睛再次。就像……嗯？他卧室的墙在哪里？他卧室的天花板在哪里？其实想想……他的床在哪儿，他的房间在哪儿？

几乎所有看起来很熟悉的东西都是在漆黑浩瀚的午夜天空中闪烁的几颗星星。还是晚上，他身上还裹着手工编织的阿富汗毛衣。然而，代替他的毛绒枕头和柔软的床的是沙滩。他的床柱现在是一棵摇曳的、长满椰子的棕榈树，大厅里的灯也换成了苍白的半月。

这是个玩笑吗？真的会有人不遗余力地把他从安全的夜间茧中带走，把他丢在……无处可去的地方吗？或者他在什么地方？他到底在哪里？

他从躺在地上的那块沙地上站起来，拂去睡裤上的一些松散颗粒。沙子凉爽干燥，很容易从织物上滑落。一阵冷风吹乱了他的头发，在他的皮肤上形成了小小的鸡皮疙瘩。贾斯汀揉着他的上臂，试图让它们暖和起来，但他的脊椎继续颤抖。他很害怕，也很困惑。

当他的眼睛适应了黑暗后，他又环顾四周。他好像在某个热带岛屿上。远处的沙滩、棕榈树和波光粼粼的海水，与他沉睡的新英格兰小镇绝对是天壤之别。事实上，这与贾斯汀以前见过的任何东西都相去甚远。他最接近在海滩上漫步的一次是他和他的家人去佛罗里达州拜访范妮奶奶的一次。然而，任何海滩漫步都因赫尔曼大叔的胸痛而去当地急诊室而缩短，结果证明是气体。

在远处，贾斯汀可以看到月光下的棕榈树枝下有一个黑影在移动。它似乎是一种动物。它的头又大又光滑，呈椭圆形，长长的脖子伸向狭窄的身体。它的躯干位于两条细长的手臂和两条又长又细的腿的中央。这个生物只是一动不动地站在树底下，尖尖的肩膀向前拱起，手臂平放在身体上。如果任何人类品质都可以描述这个生物，贾斯汀认为它会“悲伤”。它看起来几乎可怜。

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The black form began to move after staying in a frozen stance for what seemed like an unusually long time. As it started to migrate away from the palm tree, Justin leapt backward behind a huge, seaweed- strewn rock. What was it? And whatever it was, did it bite?

“Ouch! Man, that hurt!” came a squeal from underneath his feet. Startled, he quickly moved off the unknown source of the cry.

“You get three wishes, dude,” a somewhat annoyed voice said from below.

“Huh?” Justin was dazed. “Who’s... what’s this?”

“You step on the magic snake, dude, and you get three wishes. That’s just the way it goes. So what are they?”

Justin backed slowly away from the rock. A large snake slithered out from underneath it. It stretched its body high into the air and looked up at him.

“You...” Justin shut his eyes tightly and then opened them again. “I don’t get this. Wait.” Justin laughed nervously and waved his hand at the snake. “You can... speak? A snake can speak? Yeah, right...”

黑色的身影在静止了好久似乎异常长的时间后，开始动了起来。当它开始远离棕榈树时，贾斯汀向后跳到一块布满海藻的巨大岩石后面。它以前如何？不管它是什么，它咬人了吗？

“哎哟！伙计，好痛！”他的脚下传来尖叫声。他吓了一跳，迅速离开了不知从哪里传来的哭声。

“你实现了三个愿望，伙计，”下面传来一个有些恼火的声音。

“嗯？”贾斯汀茫然。“谁……这是什么？”

“你踩到魔蛇，伙计，你会实现三个愿望。事情就是这样。所以呢他们是吗？”

贾斯汀慢慢地后退离开岩石。一条大蛇从下面钻了出来。它的身体高高地伸向空中，抬头看着他。

“你……”Justin 紧紧闭上了眼睛，然后又睁开了。“我不明白这个。等待。”贾斯汀紧张地笑了笑，朝蛇挥了挥手。“你可以说？蛇会说话？对对对……”

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He felt the air above the snake’s head, searching for signs of marionette strings. “This is too much,” he said. “Someone’s messing with me.”

“I ain’t just a snake, dude,” it hissed. “I’m a magic snake. And you have three wishes. You step on me, and I have to grant you three wishes of whatever you want. Those are the rules, boy. So what do you want? A new bike? Straight A’s?”

“This is too weird,” Justin said. “A... talking...snake?”

“Dude,” the snake said. “Get over it, will you? And tell me what you want already. I have things to do. Come on. What are the wishes? New laptop with high speed Internet access? Wide angle binocular telescope? A Marvel Comics collecton...”

The snake was interrupted by a strange sound in the distance. It was coming from the creature, which was hunched over with its oval head buried in its hands. It looked as if it was crying.

“Who... what is that?” Justin asked. “And where am I? What’s going on?”

The snake hissed and wiggled away from the rock. “Irvino.”

“Irvino? What’s... Where’s... Who’s Irvino?”

“Irvino’s the name of that dude crying over there,” the snake said impatiently. “He’s a Werloobee.

Can you just tell me your three wishes so I can grant them and get outta here?”

“A... Werloobee? What’s that?” Justin asked.

“Kiddo, you’re cruisin’ for a bruisin’, you know that?” the snake hissed. “Do I look like an encyclopedia, or what?”

“I don’t know where I am or what’s going on,” Justin said. “I was sleeping in my bed one minute,

and next minute I'm... I don't know what or where. Can you just tell me what that thing is over there?" "Werloobee... Wer-loo-bee," the snake said. "Come on, you honestly don't know what a Werloobee is? What kind of rock did you just crawl out from underneath?" The snake started to laugh. "Did you get that joke? Get it? I mean, me, a snake, asking you what kind of rock you crawled out of! Ha

ha!"

Justin stood quietly, looking down at the snake, his mouth taut and straight across his face.

"No sense of humor, man!" the snake said, inching its way toward the tip of Justin's sneaker.

"So

a Werloobee, for those of us who apparently have led a very sheltered life, is this beach's main inhabitant. Hey, I really do sound like an encyclopedia, don't I?"

"Where am I? What island is this? And how did I get here?" Justin asked.

他感受着蛇头上方的空气，寻找木偶线的迹象。“这太多了，”他说。“有人欺负我。”

“我不仅仅是一条蛇，伙计，”它嘶嘶地说。“我是一条魔法蛇。你有三个愿望。你踩我，你要什么，我就得给你三个愿望。这些是规则，男孩。所以你想要什么？一辆新自行车？直 A 的？”

“这太奇怪了，”贾斯汀说。“一条……会说话的……蛇？”

“伙计，”蛇说。“克服它，好吗？并告诉我你想要什么。我有事情要做。快点。有什么愿望？可以高速上网的新笔记本电脑？广角双筒望远镜？漫威漫画系列……”

蛇被远处奇怪的声音打断了。它来自那个生物，它弓着背，椭圆形的脑袋埋在双手里。它看起来好像在哭。

“谁……那是什么？”贾斯汀问道。“我在哪里？这是怎么回事？”

蛇发出嘶嘶声，扭动着离开岩石。“欧维诺。”

“欧维诺？什么……哪里……欧维诺是谁？”

“欧维诺是那边哭泣的那个家伙的名字，”蛇不耐烦地说。“他是一个 Werloobee。

你能告诉我你的三个愿望，这样我就可以实现它们并离开这里吗？”

“一个……Werloobee？那是什么？”贾斯汀问道。

“小子，你这是在找瘀伤，你知道吗？”蛇发出嘶嘶声。“我看起来像百科全书，还是什么？”

“我不知道我在哪里，也不知道发生了什么，”贾斯汀说。“我在床上睡了一分钟，下一分钟我……我不知道是什么或在哪里。你能告诉我那边那东西是什么吗？”

“Werloobee……Wer-loo-bee，”蛇说。“拜托，你真的不知道 Werloobee 是什么？你刚才从下面爬出来的是什么石头？”蛇开始笑了。“你听懂那个笑话了吗？得到它？我是说，我，一条蛇，问你是从什么石头爬出来的！哈哈！”

贾斯汀静静地站着，低头看着那条蛇，嘴巴绷得紧紧的，笔直地划过他的脸。

“没有幽默感，伙计！”蛇说着，慢慢地向贾斯汀的运动鞋尖移动。“所以对于我们这些显然过着非常隐蔽的生活的人来说，Werloobee 是这个海滩的主要居民。嘿，我真的听起来像一本百科全书，不是吗？”

“我在哪里？这是什么岛？我是怎么到这里来的？”贾斯汀问道。

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“Well, dude, all I can tell you is this. The ocean’s right over there.” The snake pointed its head toward the waves of water rolling on shore. “And I think this is one of them... how do you say it... archipelago types of places. As to exactly where you are, like in terms of degrees north or south or east or west like the position of a cyclone on the open waters, I just ain’t knowledgeable enough to let you know. Look, man. Give me your wishes. You’re really starting to annoy me. I got things to...”

The snake’s voice was drowned out by the sound of more cries in the distance. Irvino was still hunched over and wailing.

“What’s the matter with him?” Justin asked.

“Dude’s been banished.”

“Banished? What do you mean?”

“He’s been cut off from the rest. They didn’t want him around. They didn’t like him,” the snake said.

“There are others? Where?”

“They’re on the other side of the island. Look, if you don’t give me your three wishes, dude, I’m gonna...”

“What don’t they like about him?” Justin asked.

“好吧，伙计，我只能告诉你这个。大海就在那边。”蛇把头指向岸边翻滚的水波。“而且我认为这是其中之一……你怎么说……群岛类型的地方。至于你的确切位置，比如北或南或东或西的度数，比如旋风在开阔水域的位置，我只是没有足够的知识让你知道。看，伙计。给我你的愿望。你真的开始惹恼我了。我有事要……”

蛇的声音被远处更多的哭声淹没了。欧维诺仍然弯着腰哭泣。

“他怎么了？”贾斯汀问道。

“伙计被放逐了。”

“放逐？你是什么意思？”

“他与其他人隔绝了。他们不想让他在身边。他们不喜欢他，”蛇说。

“还有其他人？在哪里？”

“他们在岛的另一边。听着，如果你不满足我的三个愿望，伙计，我会……”

“他们不喜欢他什么？”贾斯汀问道。

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“He’s different, man,” the snake said. “You know, he looks different from the rest. Smaller. Skinny. Three wishes, before I go out of my mind over here.”

“Is that why he’s crying?” Justin asked. “Because he’s all alone, away from the others?”

“I doubt it,” the snake said. “He was probably happy to get away from them. They were always picking on him and pushing him around.”

“Then what’s he so sad about?”

The snake sighed. "Dude, do I really have to get into this with you? After this, I'm telling you... I am going to be so unbelievably careful not to get stepped on. This is so not worth it."

"Just tell me," Justin said.

"Why do you care?"

"I just do. Tell me, okay?"

"If I were a real jerk, I'd make this count as one of your wishes. But because I'm a nice, man-about-town kind of guy, I'll let this one slide. Get it? Slide? Like a snake? Ha! Anyway, so this dude Irvino was banished to a part of the island that isn't very fertile."

"Not fertile?" Justin asked. "What do you mean?"

"Man, you just have to have every little thing spelled out for you, don't you?" the snake said, sighing loudly. "So like, Irvino's upset because he's been banished to a part of the island that has very little food. All he's got is this one banana tree that grows over-ripened bananas that are so rotten that he can't eat them. Then there's this one crazy cow that always makes milk that tastes too spoiled to drink. And there's one grapevine growing that's constantly losing its grapes, which fall to the ground only to be stomped on and mashed by the crazy cow. Now what are your wishes, dude?"

Justin stared at the snake, trying to process everything that he was being told. This was difficult, as he was still trying to process the fact that he was talking to a talking snake.

"So..." Justin started, ignoring the snake's persistence to get a wish out of him. So... That's why... he's upset?"

"Nah, it's even worse than just him not having much chow," the snake murmured. "He's hoping to put on some weight and get a little bigger so he can look more like the other dudes. Then maybe they'll like him more."

"But I thought you just said he was probably happy to be away from the others. Now you're saying he wants them to like him more?" Justin shook his head and gave the snake a quizzical look.

“他不一样，伙计，”蛇说。“你知道，他看起来和其他人不一样。更小。瘦骨嶙峋的。三个愿望，在我在这里发疯之前。”

“这就是他哭的原因吗？”贾斯汀问道。“因为他一个人，远离其他人？”

“我对此表示怀疑，”蛇说。“他可能很高兴摆脱他们。他们总是挑剔他，把他推来推去。”

“那他有什么好伤心的？”

蛇叹了口气。“伙计，我真的需要和你扯上关系吗？在此之后，我告诉你.....我会非常小心，不要被踩到。这太不值得了。”

“告诉我，”贾斯汀说。

“你为什么在乎？”

“我只是做。告诉我，好吗？”

“如果我是一个真正的混蛋，我会把这算作你的愿望之一。但是因为我是一个好人，男人关于城镇的那种人，我会让这个幻灯片。得到它？滑动？像蛇？哈！不管怎样，欧维诺这个家伙被放逐到了岛上不太肥沃的地方。”

“不生育？”贾斯汀问道。“你是什么意思？”

“伙计，你只需要为你拼出每一件小事，不是吗？”蛇说，大声叹息。“就像，欧维诺很不高兴，因为他被放逐到岛上食物很少的地方。他只有一棵香蕉树，上面长着熟透了的香蕉，烂到他吃不下的地步。然后是一头发疯的母牛，它总是生产出味道太坏而无法饮用的牛奶。有一棵葡萄树不断地掉落葡萄，掉到地上只会被疯牛踩踏和压碎。现在你的愿望是什么，伙计？”

贾斯汀盯着那条蛇，试图处理他被告知的一切。这很难，因为他仍在努力处理他正在和一条会说话的蛇说话的事实。

“所以……”贾斯汀开口了，无视蛇执意要从他身上得到一个愿望。所以……这就是为什么……他不高兴？

“不，这比他没吃多少食物还要糟糕，”蛇低声说。“他希望增加一些体重并变得更大一点，这样他就可以看起来更像其他人。然后他们可能会更喜欢他。”

“但我想你只是说他可能很高兴远离其他人。现在你是说他想让他们更喜欢他？”贾斯汀摇摇头，疑惑地看了蛇一眼。

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“Well, uh... Um... What I mean is... Hey, man, we gotta focus here! Do you want these wishes or not?”

Justin continued. “And if he’s already ‘too thin for them,’ then why do the others banish him to a place with less food, when he needs it more than they do?”

The snake cocked his head to one side. “Yeah, I guess it doesn’t make much sense. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer.” For the first time, the snake looked more thoughtful and less impatient.

Justin looked over at Irvino, who had stopped sobbing. The creature was silent now, with his tall, oval head hidden behind his long, thin fingers.

“Why are the others being like that?” Justin asked. “Because he’s different? Because he has his own way about him? His own style? Because he isn’t a boring, carbon copy of the rest?”

The snake yawned. “I’m still waiting for your three wishes, man. Gettin’ tired of repeating myself.”

Justin’s face reddened. Beads of sweat broke out on his forehead and he wiped them angrily off with the back of his hand. “You know what I wish?” Justin growled, unable to control his rage.

“You really want to know what I wish? I wish those rotten bananas over there would turn into awesome banana cream pie! I wish that sour milk from the crazy cow would turn into the most scrumptious of yogurt! And I wish those mashed grapes would turn into the sweetest, most delicious juice Irvino ever drank! Those are my three wishes!”

The snake stared up at Justin and remained quiet for a moment. Then it shook its head, drew a deep breath and stretched its body high into the air.

“Okay, dude. Here you go,” the snake hissed. A sliver of red tongue shot out from its mouth, and its head began to vibrate wildly. The ground rumbled, and soon rolls of sand along the beach rapidly formed and raced underneath shallow waves of ocean water. Funnels of fiery smoke darted out from both sides of the snake’s head. Its eyes bulged out of its sockets as it focused on the banana tree.

Whoosh!

A mushroom of explosive smoke enveloped the tree and then slowly cleared. Once the last puffs of thick hot air drew away, what stood in the tree's place was a large tin filled to its rim with banana cream pie. The snake turned its attention to the cow, and its eyes protruded and sliver of tongue thrashed madly about.

Whoosh!

“好吧，呃……嗯……我的意思是……嘿，伙计，我们得集中注意力在这里！这些愿望你要不要？”

贾斯汀继续说道。“如果他已经‘对他们来说太瘦了’，那么当他比他们更需要食物时，为什么其他人会把他放逐到食物较少的地方呢？”

蛇把头歪向一边。“是啊，我想这没有多大意义。富者愈富，穷者愈穷。”第一次，蛇看起来更加深思熟虑，不那么急躁了。

贾斯汀转头看着欧维诺，他已经停止抽泣了。这个生物现在沉默了，他那高大的椭圆形脑袋藏在他又长又细的手指后面。

“为什么其他人都这样？”贾斯汀问道。“因为他不一样？因为他有他自己的方式？他自己的风格？因为他不是其他人的无聊复制品？”

蛇打了个哈欠。“我还在等你的三个愿望，伙计。厌倦了重复自己。”

贾斯汀的脸红了。额头上渗出了细密的汗珠，他气呼呼地用手背擦了擦。“你知道我想要什么吗？”贾斯汀咆哮着，无法控制自己的愤怒。“你真的想知道我想要什么吗？我希望那边那些烂香蕉能变成很棒的香蕉奶油派！我希望疯牛的酸奶能变成最美味的酸奶！我希望那些捣碎的葡萄能变成 Irvino 喝过的最甜、最美味的果汁！这是我的三个愿望！”

蛇抬头盯着贾斯汀，沉默了一会儿。然后它摇了摇头，深吸一口气，把身体高高地伸向空中。

“好的，伙计。给你，”蛇发出嘶嘶声。一条红色的舌头从它的嘴里吐了出来，它的脑袋开始剧烈的颤动。地面隆隆作响，很快沙滩上的沙粒迅速形成，并在海水的浅波下奔跑。蛇头两侧冒出一圈圈炽热的烟雾。当它专注于香蕉树时，它的眼睛从眼窝中凸出。嗖！

一团爆炸性的烟雾笼罩着树，然后慢慢散去。当最后一股浓浓的热气散去后，站在树上的的是一个大罐头，里面装满了香蕉奶油馅饼。蛇把注意力转向牛，它的眼睛伸出来，舌头的条子疯狂地跳来跳去。

嗖！

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Charcoal black smoke danced around buckets of spoiled, curdled milk nearby where the cow stood. Once the final spirals of twisting dark air pulled away, the buckets sat overflowing with rich, creamy yogurt.

The snake's head then moved wildly about before positioning itself to face the trodden grapes mashed into the ground. Streaks of bone-white lightning flew out of the snake's eyes and branched out into the open air.

Whoosh!

White and yellow flames danced on the ground underneath the twisted grapevine. One by one the flames died down, replaced by silver clouds of smoke that eventually thinned out and disappeared into the night. A trough of sparkling juice came into view behind the last wisps of departing smoke, the surface of the liquid rippling in the moonlight.

Irvino's head swung rapidly to the left and right as he neared each item of delicious food. He hovered over the trough of juice and drank it in big, thirsty gulps. Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he dashed to the buckets of yogurt and dipped his hands deep inside of them. He then buried his face in his yogurt-filled hands and licked them, moaning with delight. He raced to the edge of the beach and dunked his hands in the ocean waters to cleanse them before he headed for the huge tin of banana cream pie to get his fill of dessert.

炭黑的烟雾在奶牛站立的地方附近的一桶桶变质、凝固的牛奶周围跳跃。一旦扭曲的黑色空气的最后螺旋消失，桶里就坐满了浓郁的奶油酸奶。

然后蛇的头疯狂地转动，然后将自己定位为面对被踩踏在地上的葡萄。一道道骨白色的闪电从蛇眼中飞出，分叉到空旷处。

嗖！

白色和黄色的火焰在扭曲的葡萄藤下的地面上跳跃。火焰一点一点地熄灭，取而代之的是银色的烟雾，最终变得稀薄，消失在夜色中。在最后一缕散去的烟雾后面，一槽闪闪发光的果汁映入眼帘，液体的表面在月光下荡漾。

欧维诺的脑袋在靠近每一道美味的食物时快速左右摆动。他在果汁槽上方盘旋，口渴地大口喝了下去。他用手背擦了擦嘴，冲向酸奶桶，双手深深地浸入其中。然后他把脸埋在满是酸奶的手上舔了舔，高兴地呻吟起来。他跑到海滩边上，将手浸入海水中清洗，然后去拿一大罐香蕉奶油馅饼吃甜点。

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Occasionally he would glance in the direction of the rock where Justin and the snake were. Justin noticed that along with Irvino's joy were also other emotions: surprise and curiosity. In the distance, Justin could see Irvino's dark shadow growing against a moonlit group of palms as he ate, drank, and groaned with satisfaction. With one final sip of sweet juice, Irvino stood tall and stretched his fattened arms out to both sides. A shattering wail erupted from his lips, a wail so powerful that the earth beneath him trembled, and night creatures scurried away to safety.

A hush fell over the island then. It was a hush so quiet, all that could be heard was the sound of waves tumbling against the ocean sand. Justin's head jerked in response to movements he could see out of the corner of his eye. He turned toward a group of palm trees not far from where Irvino stood, where he could vaguely see the dark outlines of large ovals peeking in and out of branches and peering out from behind willowy trunks. There seemed to be hundreds of them, heads smooth and large, much like Irvino's. Slowly, cautiously, the heads began to emerge from behind the palms, and within seconds Irvino was surrounded. Justin immediately noticed that the other Werloobees were similar in size to the newly enlarged Irvino.

A particularly large Werloobee approached Irvino with several inquisitive but kindly grunts. Irvino hesitated only a second before nodding his head and excitedly giving a few grunts of his own. He then proudly waved his hand in the direction of his newly found feast.

Arms reached out to touch Irvino and lift him high above all of the bubbly figures bobbing about. Irvino lifted his own arms up into the night air and leaned his head back, emitting cries of what sounded like joyous laughter.

“Well that sure did it!” chuckled the snake. “Irvino’s pretty much their hero now, since he ain’t so skinny anymore, AND especially since he’s sharing all of his awesome grub!” The snake peered longingly towards the quickly disappearing banana cream pie.

偶尔他会朝贾斯汀和蛇所在的岩石方向瞥一眼。贾斯汀注意到，除了欧维诺的喜悦之外，还有其他情绪：惊讶和好奇。

在远处，贾斯汀可以看到欧维诺的黑影在月光下的棕榈树丛中生长，他吃着喝着，满足地呻吟着。欧维诺喝完最后一口甜汁，挺直了身体，将肥肥的手臂伸向两侧。一声震耳欲聋的哀号从他的唇间发出，一声威力强大到他脚下的大地都在颤抖，夜间的生物纷纷逃到安全的地方。

岛上一片寂静。四周寂静无声，只听得见海浪拍打海沙的声音。贾斯汀的头随着他从眼角看到的动作而猛地一动。他转向离欧维诺站的地方不远的一群棕榈树，在那里他可以隐约看到大椭圆形的黑色轮廓在树枝间探出头来，又从柔软的树干后面探出头来。似乎有数百个，脑袋又大又光滑，很像欧维诺的。慢慢地，小心翼翼地，脑袋开始从手掌后面冒出来，几秒钟之内，欧维诺就被包围了。Justin 立即注意到其他 Werloobee 的尺寸与新扩大的 Irvino 相似。

一只特别大的 Werloobee 带着几声好奇但友善的咕噜声走近 Irvino。欧维诺只犹豫了一秒钟，就点了点头，兴奋地咕啾了几声。然后他自豪地向他新发现的盛宴的方向挥了挥手。

伸出双臂抚摸 Irvino，将他高高举起，高过所有来回晃动的活蹦乱跳的人。欧维诺将自己的手臂举到夜空中，头向后仰，发出听起来像是欢笑的叫声。

“嗯，确实做到了！”蛇笑道。“欧维诺现在几乎成了他们的英雄，因为他不再那么瘦了，尤其是因为他分享了他所有的美味佳肴！”蛇渴望地凝视着迅速消失的香蕉奶油馅饼。

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A wild celebration seemed to go on for hours. In the midst of it all, Werloobees continued to crowd around Irvino, often several of them grunting to him at once, and others offering him food or even just reaching out to touch him.

And then Justin noticed something interesting: Irvino had stopped eating and wasn’t laughing quite as much as he had been. He appeared to not be taking as much notice of the Werloobees that continued to surround him, showering him with attention and affection.

He doesn’t look sad like before, Justin thought. Just a little bit... wistful?

Justin then quietly crouched behind the rock with the magic snake by his side, and rose up only when the last cheers and applause had quieted down and the bands of Werloobees retreated, leaving Irvino alone.

“Why didn’t he go back with the others?” Justin whispered to the snake.

“Don’t know,” the snake replied. “They sure invited him though. He could pretty much run for Werloobee president!”

一场疯狂的庆祝活动似乎持续了几个小时。在这一切之中，Werloobee 继续聚集在 Irvino 周围，经常有几只同时对他咕哝，还有一些给他食物，甚至只是伸手去碰他。

然后贾斯汀注意到一件有趣的事：欧维诺已经停止进食，也不像以前那样大笑了。他似乎并没有太在意那些继续围绕着他的 Werloobee，他们对他充满了关注和喜爱。

他看起来不像以前那么难过了，贾斯汀想。只是一点点……渴望？

然后，贾斯汀静静地蹲在岩石后面，魔蛇在他身边，直到最后的欢呼声和掌声平息，威卢比乐队退去，留下欧维诺一个人，他才站起来。

“他为什么不和其他人一起回去？”贾斯汀对蛇耳语。

“不知道，”蛇回答。“不过他们确实邀请了他。他几乎可以竞选 Werloobee 总统！”

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Irvino’s head raised up and his eyes darted to where Justin stood stretching his stiffened legs and aching back. Irvino turned his head in the direction of the rock and began clumsily edging his way toward it. “What should I do?” Justin asked the snake frantically as he squatted again behind the rock.

“Huh? What should I do?”

“Chill, dude,” the snake hissed. “He isn’t gonna hurt you. Irvino’s cool.”

Irvino continued to creep closer, pausing only to crane his neck and peer over the rock. The snake

boldly slithered away from Justin.

“Hey, bro. What’s happenin’?” the snake asked Irvino, wiggling toward the Werloobee’s enormous webbed feet. “Congrats, my main man. Look at you, all buff and proud now. Heh, heh! Best lookin’ with the best cookin’. Hey, speakin’ of which... You wouldn’t believe how this dude over here went out on a limb for you. Ha! A snake talking about limbs! Get it?”

Irvino’s eyes crossed and his head cocked to one side. He listened intently to the snake, glancing curiously over at Justin.

“This crazy dude had three wishes that I could grant him, but instead of using those wishes on himself, he used his wishes on you.” The snake then explained everything that had happened, from Justin stepping on him to Justin’s three wishes.

Irvino whimpered softly and began to wring his hands. He rocked back and forth in place for a few seconds and then started to take wobbly steps toward Justin.

“Aaaah!” the snake shrieked. Its body was trapped under the heel of Irvino’s foot as the Werloobee continued to lumber toward Justin. Irvino wrapped his long, thin arms around Justin and squeezed him tightly.

“Not again,” the snake hissed. “Irvino, man, you gotta watch where you’re going. You got three wishes coming your way now. But please don’t take as long as the dude did, okay?”

Irvino released Justin from his embrace and slowly turned around to look down at the snake.

Half of its body was flattened and pressed into the ground. Irvino grunted twice before whistling through his broad and hooked nose. His large, soulful eyes blinked a few times before he erupted into one final, high-pitched wail.

“Hey, man, thanks,” the snake said, before the squashed part of its body was surrounded by swirls of misty air. The flattened part of the snake’s body swelled to match the rest of him. “I’ve never run into more selfless folk than the two of you dudes,” the snake said. “Irvino, you’ve still got two more wishes...”

欧维诺抬起头，目光扫向贾斯汀站着的地方，他伸展着僵硬的双腿，背痛着。欧维诺把头转向岩石的方向，开始笨拙地向它移动。“我应该怎么办？”贾斯汀重新蹲在岩石后面，疯狂地问蛇。

“嗯？我应该怎么办？”

“冷静，伙计，”蛇嘶嘶地说。“他不会伤害你的。欧维诺很酷。”

欧维诺继续爬近，只是停下来伸长脖子从岩石上方凝视。蛇大胆地从贾斯汀身边溜走。

“嗨！哥们儿。发生了什么事？”蛇问欧维诺，扭动着走向 Werloobee 的巨大的蹠足。“恭喜，我的主要人物。看看你，现在满脸骄傲。嘿嘿！最好的外观和最好的烹饪。嘿，说到哪个……你不会相信这边的这个家伙是如何为你冒风险的。哈！一条说四肢的蛇！得到它？”

欧维诺的眼睛交叉了，他的头歪向一边。他专注地听着蛇的声音，好奇地看了贾斯汀一眼。

“这个疯子有三个愿望，我可以满足他，但他没有把这些愿望用在自己身上，而是用在了你身上。”蛇随后解释了发生的一切，从贾斯汀踩到他到贾斯汀的三个愿望。

欧维诺轻轻地呜咽着，开始拧他的手。他在原地来回摇晃了几秒钟，然后开始摇摇晃晃地走向贾斯汀。

“啊啊啊！”蛇尖叫起来。当 Werloobee 继续向 Justin 缓慢移动时，它的身体被 Irvino 的脚后跟压住了。埃尔维诺用修长纤细的手臂环住贾斯汀，紧紧地搂着他。

“不要再来了，”蛇嘶嘶地说。“欧维诺，伙计，你得注意你要去的地方。你现在实现了三个愿望。但是请不要像那个家伙那样拖那么久，好吗？”

欧维诺松开怀里的贾斯汀，慢慢转身低头看着那条蛇。它的半个身体被压扁，压在了地上。埃尔维诺咕啾了两声，然后从宽阔的鹰钩鼻中吹出口哨。他深情的大眼睛眨了几次，然后爆发出最后一声尖锐的哀号。

“嘿，伙计，谢谢，”蛇说，然后它被压扁的身体部分被雾气漩涡包围。蛇身体扁平的部分膨胀起来以匹配他的其余部分。

“我从来没有遇到过比你们两个家伙更无私的人，”蛇说。“伊尔维诺，你还有两个愿望……”

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“I’d like to go home,” Justin interrupted. “Could Irvino use one of his wishes to get me back home?”

The snake looked over at Irvino. “Hey, I’d say it’s only fair, man. This dude was only thinking about you before when he used up all three of his own wishes. It’ll be nice payback if you return the favor. You’ll still have one wish left that you can use for yourself.”

Irvino's eyes opened wide and slowly filled with tears. He reached an arm out to Justin and placed his hand on Justin's shoulder. He turned his head back toward the snake and grunted a few times.

"Irvino wants to know if you're absolutely sure you want to go home. Hey, he likes you, and doesn't want you to leave," the snake said to Justin.

Justin looked into Irvino's eyes. He nodded his head slowly, and said, "I'm sorry, but yes, I'm sure."

Huge tears slid down Irvino's wide, flat face. He looked down at the snake and paused before nodding his head with one last grunt.

"All right, man. It's show time," said the snake. "He says he'll do anything for his only real friend."

Suddenly both the snake and Irvino disappeared from view as Justin found himself surrounded by bright, white steam. The steam, warm and thick, crept into Justin's mouth and nostrils and filled his lungs. Justin felt his body grow limp and numb, and gradually he sank into a deep, restful slumber.

"Goon!"

"Wimp!"

The sounds of shouting and laughter startled Justin. He lifted his head away from a pane of glass

and wiped some dried saliva off of the corner of his mouth and chin.

Where was Irvino? Where was the snake? Justin sat straight up in what he realized was a cushioned seat on his school bus. Hecklers from the back of the bus were throwing hand-folded paper airplanes and spitting slimy cherry pits in Justin's direction. A hand reached over the back of Justin's seat and set an empty milk carton on the top of his head. He angrily swatted it away. His mind was still somewhat asleep. He ran his tongue over his teeth, trying to get some moisture flowing into his dry mouth. He wondered how he got to where he was. He wondered where he had been.

He thought about Irvino. Had he made the last of his three wishes? And if so, what was it? What could he possibly still want or need, seeing that he had the admiration and respect of everyone and anyone he had ever known?

"我想回家，"贾斯汀打断道。"欧维诺可以用他的一个愿望让我回家吗？"

蛇看着欧维诺。"嘿，我会说这很公平，伙计。之前这家伙的三个愿望都用完了，他只想着你。如果你回报这个人情，那将是很好的回报。你还有一个愿望可以为自己所用。"欧维诺的眼睛睁得大大的，慢慢地充满了泪水。他向贾斯汀伸出一只手臂，将手放在贾斯汀的肩膀上。他把头转向蛇，咕哝了几声。

"Irvino 想知道你是否绝对确定你想回家。嘿，他喜欢你，不想让你离开，"蛇对贾斯汀说。

贾斯汀看着欧维诺的眼睛。他缓缓点了点头，说道："对不起，但是，是的，我确定。"巨大的泪水从欧维诺宽阔平坦的脸上滑落。他低头看着蛇，停顿了一下，然后点了点头，发出最后一声咕哝。

"好吧，伙计。表演时间到了，"蛇说。"他说他愿意为他唯一真正的朋友做任何事。"

突然，蛇和欧维诺都从视野中消失了，贾斯汀发现自己被明亮的白色蒸汽包围了。温暖而浓稠的蒸汽钻入贾斯汀的嘴巴和鼻孔，充满了他的肺部。贾斯汀感觉自己的身体变得无力和麻木，渐渐地他陷入了深深的、宁静的睡眠中。

“继续！”

“窝囊废！”

叫喊声和笑声把贾斯汀吓了一跳。他从一块玻璃上抬起头擦掉嘴角和下巴上的一些干唾液。

欧维诺在哪里？蛇在哪里？贾斯汀坐直了身子，他意识到这是一个他校车上的软垫座位。公共汽车后部的起哄者朝贾斯汀的方向投掷手工折叠的纸飞机，并吐出黏糊糊的樱桃核。一只手伸过 Justin 的椅背，将一个空牛奶盒放在他的头顶上。他愤怒地把它拍掉了。

他的脑子还有些睡意。他用舌头舔了舔牙齿，试图让一些水分流入干燥的口腔。他想知道他是怎么到他所在的地方的。他想知道他去哪儿了。

他想到了欧维诺。他实现了三个愿望中的最后一个吗？如果是这样，那是什么？既然他得到了所有他认识的人的钦佩和尊重，他还能想要或需要什么？

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Slippery cherry pits continued to fly toward Justin. Most soared past his head and bounced off of the back of the seat in front of him. Occasionally one would land in his hair and he'd have to fish it out with his thumb and forefinger. He felt another empty milk carton being balanced on the center of his scalp. Again, he irritably swept his hand across his head and knocked the carton to the floor.

A shrill howl suddenly cut through the commotion and brought all of the children to silence. Justin's head swung around and he found his eyes locking with those of an enormous blond-haired boy standing in front of the emergency exit door at the back of the bus. The child's piercing blue eyes shifted away from Justin and narrowed like a cat's as he started to walk between the seats and up the bus aisle. The pranksters froze in their seats as the large boy stalked past them, his hands balled up into threatening fists, his eyes glaring at their frightened faces.

A broad smile swept across the boy's face when he eased his way into an empty seat next to Justin. Still smiling, he winked at him.

光滑的樱桃核继续向贾斯汀飞去。大多数飞过他的头，从他前面的座位靠背弹开。偶尔会有一个落在他的头发上，他不得不用拇指和食指把它捞出来。他感觉到另一个空牛奶盒正放在头皮中央。又一次，他烦躁地用手在脑袋上一扫，把纸箱打翻在地。

一声尖锐的嚎叫突然划破了喧嚣，让所有的孩子都安静了下来。贾斯汀转过头，发现他的眼睛正盯着巴士尾部紧急出口前站着的一个金发大男孩的眼睛。孩子那双锐利的蓝眼睛从贾斯汀身上移开，当他开始在座位之间走上公共汽车过道时，他的眼睛眯得像猫一样。当大男孩从他们身边走过时，恶作剧者在座位上僵住了，他的双手握成威胁性的拳头，眼睛瞪着他们惊恐的脸。

当男孩缓缓走到贾斯汀旁边的空座位上时，他的脸上掠过灿烂的笑容。依旧笑眯眯的朝他眨了眨眼。

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“Name’s Irving,” the boy said. “You can call me ‘Irv’ for short.” He held a small cardboard carton of grape juice out to Justin. Justin took it, placed his dry lips on the edge of a tiny sipping straw, and quickly began to drink.

The sugary juice trickled easily down Justin’s throat. After one final gulp, Justin licked his newly moistened lips, enjoying the delicious aftertaste of the beverage. His new friend sat quiet and still, a content expression on his face. Justin smiled as well, thinking of the sweetness of a wish and the splendor of a dream.

“名字叫欧文，”男孩说。“你可以简称为‘Irv’。”他拿着一小纸盒葡萄汁递给贾斯汀。贾斯汀接过它，将干燥的嘴唇放在一根细小吸管的边缘，迅速开始喝了起来。

含糖的汁液顺着贾斯汀的喉咙轻而易举地流了下来。喝完最后一口后，Justin 舔了舔刚刚润湿的嘴唇，享受着饮料带来的美妙回味。他的新朋友静静地坐着，脸上洋溢着满足的表情。贾斯汀也笑了，想到愿望的甜蜜，梦想的美好。