

# **Canady Park**

by

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**Canady Park**

Kevin Landstreet, ex-computer programmer, climbed the stairs to his apartment with his head down and his hands in his pockets. At the top of the stairs he saw a piece of paper taped to his apartment door that screamed “Notice of Eviction” in bold black letters, facing outward so that everyone who passed by could read this declaration of irresponsibility. Kevin snatched the notice from the door, shoved it into the pocket of his jeans then rushed inside his apartment, locking the door behind him. He exhaled, groaned, then wondered how long it had been there. He was gone most of the day so it was conceivable that he was the pariah of the apartment building by now.

He ran a mental inventory of the residents on his floor. There was the older lady in apartment two-twenty-three, and a young couple in two-twenty-seven. These, at least, were certain to know of his shame by now. And the pretty young lady in two twenty nine probably saw the notice too. He didn’t know any of these people. He only saw them when they passed in the hallway, coming or going.

Technically, homelessness posed a greater threat to Kevin’s well-being than the threat of derision from his nebulous neighbors. Strangely though, Kevin was not concerned with technicalities at the moment. He just wanted to be liked. He could have let it go at that. It was a well-defined conclusion. However, Kevin's brain thrived on crafting paradoxes from incomplete data and creating enigmas out of the obvious. His mind acted like a supercomputer generating bad data due to faulty programming. With his backside planted firmly against the inside of his apartment door, he stared blankly into his living room and pondered.

Before long a new paradox thrust itself under the electron microscope of his analytically conscious mind to be reverse engineered until it was dis-assembled into its constituent parts. This paradox took the shape of the following circular statement: “The harder I work to make people like me, the less they do.” Thus, his thoughts devolved into even more convoluted circularities, each one based upon the one preceding it with only occasional permutations or new data sets introduced into the flow. If it were physically possible for one’s head to explode from too much thought, Kevin would have been a very dangerous person to be around.



Four months earlier Kevin had lost his job as a computer programmer. It wasn't a very good job, but it paid the bills. Even when they cut his hours he was able to scrimp by. But the day finally came, as he feared it might - and it always did - that he was called into the boss's office and let go. "Just not enough work to keep a full staff right now Kev," explained his boss.

With all of the time and effort that Kevin devoted to thought, it could be assumed that he was brilliant, perhaps even a genius. The truth is, Kevin did not know very much. The overwhelming amount of cyclical processing kept his mind tied up most of the time. His thought processes formed something of a closed system. Very little went in. Very little came out.

Over the next three months he slipped further and further behind. During this period he managed to cobble together one job interview with a building maintenance company. He found the listing in the classified jobs section of the newspaper and wasn't sure what it entailed. The ad had no description, just a phone number under the heading Affiliated Office Ablutions. Kevin assumed, correctly, that this was the company's name. He called the number and was told when to show up for an interview.

The day of the interview Kevin paced back and forth in front of a single story office in a strip mall until finally working up the courage to go inside. He approached a purple-haired receptionist whose face was studded like a practice pad in a rivet gun factory with frightening metallic objects. Her black lips bulged like a Yin/Yang symbol on her deathly-pale face. Kevin cleared his throat. "Hi, I'm Kevin Landstreet," his voice cracked. "I'm here for a job interview."

The receptionist looked up at Kevin, opened her mouth and clicked a bolt imbedded in her tongue against a tooth. The sound made Kevin shiver. The girl sighed, then picked up a form and handed it to Kevin. He took it, thanked her, then found a seat in the reception area. He didn't have a clipboard and was afraid to ask for one, so he began filling out the application on his lap. This wasn't working out very well because at the same moment Kevin's feet decided, quite on their own, that they were more interested in ballistic bouncing. Kevin, in turn, was obliged to institute Directive Seventeen.

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Directive Seventeen was a situational stop-gap that Kevin had developed over time to compensate for his unruly mental processes. It was designed to devise and implement corrective alternatives when his, sometimes unresponsive, body became detached from the diluted commands of his overtaxed brain. This particular implementation of Directive Seventeen required that Kevin stand up and fill out his application against the wall.

Upon completion of this task he returned the filled out application to the receptionist, then sat down in his seat to await his interview. As he sat in the waiting room Kevin noticed several other men filling out applications. He compared their manner of dress to his own apparel choices for the day. This, of course, presented a conundrum for Kevin's besieged mind to mull. Unfortunately his capacity to mull seemed to be offline. This had happened before. Kevin knew it to be a precursor sign, not a good one, especially when coupled with the fact that he had just instituted Directive Seventeen.

Taken together these were undeniable indicators that Kevin was about to experience something that his doctor referred to as a "Panic Attack". As fate would have it, Kevin's mind chose a bad time to initiate the "Panic Attack" subroutine. For, at that moment, he perceived an audible and very familiar string of consonants and vowels. "Kevin Landstreet!" the receptionist called. It was his turn to be interviewed.

The interview started out pretty well. There were smiles, and handshakes. Kevin sat erect in his chair. He listened to the Interview Lady's summary of Affiliated Office Ablutions' corporate mission. She expounded upon its goals, and its commitment to "unabashed quality and customer service". So far as Kevin could tell, the momentum was flowing in his favor. Then, a change occurred in the dynamics of the interview. A sudden silence indicated to Kevin that he had arrived at a nexus. He deduced that this was the point where he was required to provide input into the conversation.

Most people know that a frozen computer cannot process anything. It becomes oblivious to any command that its user may attempt to give it. The image on the screen could look perfectly normal, but it is nothing more than a ghost of the last successfully executed command that occurred before the processor froze. This was essentially Kevin's state of mind at that moment. If he had been capable of describing the situation he might have said, "this is the point in the interview when the momentum changed."

Kevin would have paid good money, if he had had any, for a Directive Seventeen to throw at this problem. But Directive Seventeens required a functional brain in which to execute their instruction set. At the moment, Kevin's supply of functional brains had fallen below the minimum system requirements needed to run one.

It became painfully apparent to Kevin that the disturbing smile affixed to his face, like an "under construction" page on a web site, could not hold out much longer as a substitute for communication. An internal battle to restore his functionality raged as each excruciating moment of silence blipped out of existence and was replaced by an even more excruciating moment of silence, and so on, until the truth revealed itself that his brain was thousands of miles away on a slow bus to nowhere, and he was out of time.

After a minute or two of leaden silence the interview lady smiled. Kevin couldn't see this. What he saw was a radiantly white sheet of paper floating in front of his face, the words "Notice of Eviction" blinking on and off just above its surface.

"Well then," said the interview lady. "If there's nothing more..." She rose from her chair and offered her hand. Kevin grasped it like an automaton, but was at a loss for what to do next. The interview lady escorted him, as one would an invalid, to the door. All of this happened quickly, or so it seemed to Kevin, as if in one fluid motion. He found himself standing outside the interview lady's office door, but couldn't gauge how long he had been there. She was saying something. The words fluttered around his head. With some difficulty he caught them and deciphered their meaning. "We will contact you if we decide to hire you."

For one magnificent nanosecond these words filled Kevin with hope. Then he realized that this was merely an aberration of vestigial optimism ricocheting around his brain like a wily virus. This he quarantined, and purged from the system.

"Thank you very much for your time," said Kevin automatically. The sound of his own voice stunned him. He turned and walked out the front door of the building knowing that they would not be contacting him.



Now, standing in his apartment with his back against the door, Kevin pulled the eviction notice from his pocket. He tried to read the legalese printed in tiny letters on the back of it. There were a lot of words that he did not understand. He was hoping that there

might be a clause that said something to the effect that he could stay in his apartment a little bit longer if he promised to keep trying, but it was hopeless.

Kevin put the eviction notice on top of his television set. He walked over to the sofa and lay down. He was nauseous and exhausted when he closed his eyes and crossed his forearms over them. Within a few minutes his system had achieved complete and heavenly shutdown.



When he awoke he felt light. He rose from the couch, walked into the kitchen and opened the refrigerator door. He couldn't shake this feeling of lightness, like he had lost thirty-five pounds in an hour. He closed the refrigerator door. He thought he might be able to float up off the ground if he concentrated really hard, but his mind was still fairly silent at the moment. He didn't want to disturb it. Instead, he launched himself into the air. He rose no higher than what seemed normal, and landed on his feet at what seemed to be a normal impact, considering weight and velocity. Still, he decided he liked this 'light' feeling, whatever it was. He certainly felt better now than he had before his nap.

Kevin walked back to the living room to finish reading a book about locomotives that he had started the previous evening. He stopped cold as he passed through the doorway. A bolt of fear shocked his spine. He stared at the couch where somebody lay sprawled out, apparently sleeping. The same couch that Kevin had vacated just minutes before. He crept backward a few steps, all the while trying to decide how to handle the situation. From his current vantage point all he could see was the top of the person's head, but the longer he looked, the more he sensed that this was not just a random sleepy person who had commandeered his couch. He finally worked up the courage to creep forward so he could get a better view. To his shock, he recognized the person. It was Kevin Landstreet.



Kevin sat down in a reclining chair next to the couch and watched himself sleep. He wondered if he might be dead. He didn't think so. He could see the sleeping Kevin's chest lightly rise and fall. He was afraid to touch him. "What if he wakes up?" he wondered. "What will I say to...myself?" The situation reminded Kevin vaguely of a magazine story he had read as a kid. It was about a guy who claimed to live on earth while he was awake, then when he fell asleep he would leave his body and awaken on a

planet he called Rubberworld because, in that world, things bounced with an equal and opposite force off of anything else that made contact with them. This actually made Kevin feel slightly better about the whole situation. At least *he* didn't wake up on Rubberworld.

After a while he decided he should call somebody, an ambulance, or the cops, but he had no phone service. The phone company had disconnected it a month before. He remembered the pay phone at the convenience store on the corner and decided that this was his only option. As he rose from his recliner there was a knock at the door. Kevin had no friends to speak of. There was only one person who would be knocking on his door, and Kevin was expecting him.

As he walked toward the door he rehearsed what he would say. He turned the knob and pulled the door inward. His landlord, Mr. Riskotti, five feet two inches of Italian American stood glaring.

"Hi Mr. Riskotti," said Kevin. "Listen, I understand about the rent and all, but something weird is going on here. Can I possibly use your telephone?"

Mr. Riskotti took a step backward. The scowl dropped from his face. He appeared to be staring directly at Kevin's chest.

"Mr. Riskotti," Kevin repeated. "Can I use your phone?"

Mr. Riskotti ignored him. After a short time the old fellow tiptoed stealthily forward, as if Kevin wasn't standing right there watching him. It reminded Kevin of Agent White sneaking up on Agent Black in the Mad magazine comics. Mr. Riskotti moved tentatively across the threshold, then into the apartment. "Who's there?" he asked. His voice shaking.

"It's me, Kevin."

There was no response. Mr. Riskotti acted as if he had not heard, but that was impossible. He was standing right in front of Kevin.

"Don't be tricky with me Landstreet," said Mr. Riskotti. "I know you're in here!" he said, squinting down the hallway through his thick glasses.

"I'm right here sir," said Kevin. He stepped back to give Mr. Riskotti room to enter the apartment. Mr. Riskotti took two more cautious steps then peered warily behind the door. He looked down the hallway again. This time he saw Kevin sleeping on the couch.

“There you are, you no goodkin!” said Mr. Riskotti. “Wake up!” He turned and hobbled at his normal pace down the hallway toward the living room where Kevin lay. Kevin touched Mr. Riskotti on the shoulder causing Mr. Riskotti to simultaneously yelp like a dog that had gotten its tail stepped, on and to launched himself into the wall. He slapped at the shoulder that Kevin had just touched as if trying to swat a horsefly. His glasses fell to the carpet, knocked off by his impact with the wall. Mr. Riskotti looked directly at Kevin, but his gaze had a distant quality, as if he were looking through him. Then, he turned and ran from the apartment faster than Kevin ever imagined the old man could move. His glasses remained on the hallway floor. Kevin picked them up then ran out the door. “Mr. Riskotti! Your glasses!” Mr. Riskotti was nowhere to be seen.

Kevin returned to the apartment and put Mr. Riskotti’s glasses on top of the eviction notice that he had laid on the TV, then he stepped back out of the apartment and closed the door behind him. He had no destination in mind so he wandered around the park. For some reason he felt calm. This was a feeling that Kevin rarely experienced for any length of time. Under the circumstances he decided that this feeling seemed out of place, so he started to analyze why, then decided he didn't care. He would just enjoy it while it lasted.

An hour later he walked down Cape Hope street toward his apartment building. An ambulance and two police cars were parked in front of the building. As he walked, he watched two paramedics work a gurney down the last few steps and onto the sidewalk. Kevin was still half a block away when he realized who was on the gurney.

“Wait!” he yelled. He ran, flailing his arms in the air, trying to get the paramedics’ attention.

“Wait, don’t take him yet!” Kevin yelled so hard his ribs cramped up forcing him to stop running, and giving the paramedics time to get the gurney into the back of the ambulance and close the doors. By the time Kevin reached the front of his apartment building the ambulance was pulling out into traffic, escorted by the police cruisers.

Kevin looked to the entrance of the building. At the top of the steps he saw Mr. and Mrs. Riskotti clutching each other, both transfixed on the morbid motorcade that made its way up Cape Hope Street and out of sight.

“Mr. Riskotti! Mrs. Riskotti!” Kevin yelled. He waved his arms in the air. Neither of them paid any attention to him. Together, they turned. Mr. Riskotti put an arm around his



wife, who seemed to be crying. They shuffled back into the apartment building closing the door behind them.

Kevin tried to get into his apartment. The door was locked. He had left his key inside. He considered knocking on the Riskottis' door, but decided that wouldn't be a good idea. So he walked aimlessly around the city nestled in a comfortable, albeit dark, haze of jumbled thoughts. When he finally re-gathered his wits he found himself sitting on a bench in Canady Park.

"Funny thing about parks," he thought, "seems like people only visit when there's no place else to go." Kevin surveyed his surroundings. Scraps of paper and empty soda cans lined the sides of the walking trail. A lonely bicycle leaned against an old tree. It had been there so long that rust stains ran from its decrepit frame and down the bark of the tree. It seemed as though the sun should be blazing judging from the quality of the light that reflected off of the pavement and the glittering halo of gold flecks that glinted off of the tree's leaves, but Kevin didn't feel warm, or cold. Temperature didn't seem to be a factor at all as far as he could tell. He noticed there weren't many people in the park. Near the small lake in the center of the park was a playground, but no children. In their place was garbage. It was all over the place. Kevin wondered who was supposed to keep this place up. Whoever it was, they weren't doing their job. He doubted that this type of neglect would be tolerated on Rubberworld. Maybe he would have been better off there. He reviewed his options for living quarters and decided that this park bench was as good a place as any to call home, at least for now.

With that seminal decision out of the way, Kevin felt like he had accomplished something. He said hello to the few people who walked by on the trail that ran in front of the bench. Surprisingly, nobody gave any sign of acknowledgment. He looked down at himself to see if there was something wrong with his appearance. Everything looked okay.

Out of boredom he picked up a discarded candy bar wrapper. He held it in the air and watched it flop up and down in the afternoon breeze. He was about to drop the wrapper when he noticed that he had commanded the attention of a young couple who had been walking by.

“Look at that!” said the young man,, pointing at the fluttering wrapper. The lady with him looked to where he pointed.

“What is it?” she asked. They gazed directly at the candy bar wrapper.

“It’s a piece of paper, or something,” said the young man. He approached Kevin, still focused on the candy bar wrapper. Then, he reached out and plucked the wrapper from Kevin’s fingers.

“It was just floating there,” said the lady. She stepped closer to the man and wrapped her hands around his forearm. The two stood silently in front of Kevin and studied the wrapper.

“Hello,” said Kevin. There was no indication that they had heard, or noticed him. Kevin was used to being overlooked due to his hesitant personality, but he had never in his life been flat out ignored as much as he had been today. The young man dropped the wrapper. They watched it float to the ground then drift across the trail on a breeze.

“Weird,” said the young man.

“Yeah. Really weird!” replied the young lady. At this, they turned and walked away, arm in arm.

"Am I invisible?" Kevin shouted in frustration to no-one in particular.

Kevin stewed for a while then let it go. He noticed for the first time a water tower sitting on the edge of the park. By the end of the following day Kevin had moved from the park bench to the top of the tower. At night a bank of bright ground lights were focused skyward around its circumference. This made it easy to read the scraps of magazines and newspapers he was able to collect from around the park. Kevin was not concerned that he would be seen moving around on the catwalk that encircled the green and white bulb of the tower. He had tentatively come to terms with the probability that he was indeed invisible, at least until he could come up with a better explanation.

The water tower, he realized, was a definite improvement over the bench. This view was better than those from the high priced condos across the street. He could see the entire park from the west side of the tower. He found that sitting on the edge of the catwalk and dangling his legs over was extremely gratifying, and being able to observe people in complete anonymity was great fun.

As he sat and observed the goings-on in Canady Park he noticed that, of the few folks who bothered to visit the park, most folks seemed content to just flow along, stopping here to look at a flower and there to admire a tree. Every now and then he noticed somebody scurrying through, looking out of place among the slower-moving folk. He felt sorry for these scurriers. Many times he himself had scurried through the park on his way here or there. For him it had been no more than a shortcut, a quicker way to get to somewhere else. He had been lost in his own hectic thoughts whenever he had passed through Canady Park. This was the first time that he had slowed down enough to see what was here.

It suddenly struck Kevin that his mind was silent. The realization made him feel a little dizzy. He began to wonder if he shouldn't be analyzing some internal quandary or trying to gather up the detritus of his mind into a large pile, to be sifted through and extrapolated from. Perhaps this would be a better use of his time than sitting around watching people walk in the park. He had nearly convinced himself that this new-found contentment was ultimately bad for him when he saw a boy and a girl, hardly more than toddlers, waddling down the trail hand in hand, one supporting the other. A kind looking lady walked closely behind them, absorbed in the children's motions. On her face was a rare smile. Kevin recalled the metaphor 'glowing smile' and thought that it applied here. However, when he looked closer he realized that he was wrong about the metaphor part. The lady's smile radiated. It reflected some wonderfully real emotion happening within her. He realized he was smiling too. While he looked out over the park the seed of an idea unraveled its delicate roots in Kevin's mind. He wasn't rehashing the past, nor was he digging through long dead memories this time. This was something new, and it was growing inside of him. He was beginning to believe that Canady park could be the most wonderful place in the city.

He had been on the water tower for four days. Oddly, it was just now that he realized something very important. He hadn't eaten anything, nor had he slept, since he had left his apartment. The weird thing was, he wasn't hungry or tired. He felt fine. In fact, he felt better than he had in years. Upon discovering these facts he became a bit nervous. But that didn't last long. He conceded that there was nothing normal about his current situation to begin with, and chose to ignore these odd symptoms, at least for now. If he

got hungry at some point, he reasoned, or noticed himself feeling bad, he would find some food and get some sleep. Until then, good riddance! Besides, Kevin had a plan.



That evening he waited until the bells in the Methodist church belfry rang ten p.m., then he climbed down from the water tower. Kevin had sketched out a grid map of the park on a piece of half used notebook paper that he had picked up as it blew across the grass.

He began at a place labeled "sector one" on his map. It was at the northeast corner of the park, on the riverfront. He pulled an old car tire from the mud of the riverbank and leaned it next to the garbage can by the walking trail. He retrieved debris, paper cups, wrappers and dead sticks that had fallen from the trees. He picked up all the little pieces of a paper plate that had been run over by a lawnmower. He deposited all of this into the garbage can. Occasionally a gaggle of boys, or a jogger would pass by. He would stop working until they had passed by, then he was back at it until the belfry clock struck four a.m.. At that point he returned to the water tower.

Over the next few nights Kevin cleaned sectors two and three on his map. He was cleaning sector four when an old lady approached walking up the trail. He didn't bother to hide. He stood at the side of the trail and waited for her to pass. She moved slowly. Her cane clicked on the pavement with every other step. Kevin whispered, "Have a good evening, Madam," as she passed by. When she had gotten far enough up the trail, he resumed his work. He had nearly forgotten about the old lady when he heard an angry shout coming from somewhere up the trail. He looked to see if the old lady was still in sight.

"Give it to me, you old bag!" he heard. "Give me the purse, or I'll cut it out of your hand!"

Kevin ran up the path as quietly as he could. He saw the same gaggle of boys he had seen on his first night of cleaning. One of the boys was pointing a knife at the old lady. He pushed her, and she fell to the pavement. The boys laughed as she hit the ground. Her scarf shot off of her head and landed on the trail. One of them kicked it into the dirt. The boy who had pushed the lady reached down and ripped the purse from her hand. At this, the boys turned in Kevin's direction and ran.

Kevin held his ground and waited for them to reach him. When the boy with the purse arrived in front of him, Kevin extended his leg, tripping the boy. The purse flew from his hand and skidded into the woods as he nose-dived into the pavement.

The fallen boy sat up slowly, groaning. He put a trembling hand to his face and wiped away the blood that ran freely from his crooked nose. Upon seeing his own blood he began whimpering. This quickly turned to sobs. The other boys stood silent, watching awkwardly and glancing at each other as their leader blubbered something incomprehensible about his mother. Finally, a boy laughed. The others joined in, and the first laughing boy trotted into the woods reappearing seconds later with the scuffed purse.

“C’mon!” he yelled. “Leave the crybaby!”

The gang simultaneously turned and followed the boy with the purse, who was now jogging down the trail. Kevin leaned over the crying boy who was still on the ground, and studied his injury, unobserved. The flow of blood was slowing. It appeared that he might have a broken nose, but Kevin thought he would be okay. Kevin stood and ran after the fleeing group of boys. He ran hard, not caring about making noise. Some of the boys heard his footfalls and turned to look just as he slammed into the rear of the pack with his full weight. Three boys went down. The boy with the purse stopped to see what was happening, then turned and bolted. Kevin got up and chased him. He was winded, and the boy was very fast, but Kevin caught up with him and tackled him. A loud pop sounded as they hit the pavement. He untangled himself from the boy as quickly as he could, and stood up. The boy stayed down.

Kevin inspected himself for injuries. Just a scrape on his right forearm. Apparently, the boy had broken his fall. The boy remained on the ground clutching the purse. He wasn't more than twelve years old. His chin quivered on his pale face.

The boy rose carefully from the ground and stumbled forward. He limped a little, then studied the scuffed purse in his hand for a few moments before he dropped it. The purse made a thud when it hit the ground, followed by a jingling sound as change rolled out onto the asphalt trail. The other boys ambled down the trail, including the one with the broken nose. Kevin stepped aside and watched as each boy walked warily around the purse then continued down the trail and disappeared into the darkness, none of them aware of his presence.

Kevin picked the change up from the ground and put it back into the purse, then ran up the trail. The old lady was standing, her gray hair in a disheveled pile on her head. She looked down the trail toward Kevin. He expected to see terror, or a grimace of pain on her face. Instead, she seemed enthralled with wonderment, or amusement. He realized that he was still holding the purse, and started to put it down, then changed his mind. He slowly approached her. She watched, smiling, as her purse floated up the trail toward her. She extended her arm and gently grasped the handle. Then, she made a slow arthritic turn and resumed her dignified amble up the trail in the direction she had been heading, as if nothing had happened. Kevin followed her out of the park and a short way down Cape Hope Street to her apartment building. He watched to make sure that she made it safely up the steps and inside, then he headed back to the park. Along the side of the trail he spotted the old lady's scarf. He picked it up, dusted it off, and folded it neatly, then put it into the back pocket of his jeans.

On the nights that followed Kevin went about his business going sector by sector, night after night, cleaning up the park. Occasionally he found an old newspaper stuffed between the slats of a bench. This he would fold and put into his pocket so he would have something to read during the day.

He had to be more cautious now. The park authorities had taken notice of his neat piles of trash and were interested in finding out who was responsible for them. Kevin noticed more police patrols in the park at night. They would shine their cruiser lights into the bushes and trees along the walking path. This presented no real problem for Kevin. He would simply stop what he was doing until the cruiser passed.

A rumor, or myth - he didn't know exactly what to call it - was developing. One day as Kevin sat on a park bench watching the people, he overheard two boys carrying skateboards and talking about the Ghost of Canady Park. This surprised, and delighted him. Normally his mind would have kicked into analysis mode at this point, but his mind had stopped doing that of late. Instead, he found a grassy place in the sun to relax and observe the arrangements of life that interwove and unraveled all around him.

Later that day Kevin returned to the water tower. He still had some time before ten p.m. so he pulled one of the crumpled newspapers from his pocket. He started by reading the funnies and worked his way to the crossword puzzle. The topic was Movie Stars. Not

one of Kevin's strong points, but he ended up filling in half of the blocks before he had to give up. He grew bored with the paper and began folding it up when a picture caught his eye. He had seen it many times in another form. Originally it had been a picture of himself and his brother Matt. It was taken just before Matt left for Iraq. This was the last time Kevin saw his brother. Kevin kept the picture in a frame on the wall of his apartment. Now, the picture was cropped. It showed only Kevin's face. Printed below the picture was a short statement:

*Thirty seven year old Kevin Landstreet  
was found comatose in his apartment at  
1474 Cape Hope Street on Thursday.  
He was taken to Morrissey  
General Hospital where he  
remains in critical condition.*



A month had passed since Kevin began cleaning up Canady Park, and he was now on the last sector of his grid map. He went about his work as thoroughly as usual, but there wasn't very much to do in this sector. He was finished in an hour, so he decided to walk around the park and pick up any trash that had accumulated in the other sectors.

Over the past month Kevin had noticed changes. There was less trash left on the ground at the end of each day. Children played on the playground and elderly people congregated around the park benches. An impromptu daily chess tournament had formed under the covered picnic tables by the river. Even the park department seemed to be getting involved. Two days earlier, as Kevin sat on the water tower watching the bustling park activities, he watched the lawnmower operator stop his mower and get off. He walked over to a piece of paper that lay in the path of his mower, picked it up and put it in his pocket, then went back to mowing. Now, as Kevin walked through the park, he felt pride. Some of this was for what he had accomplished, but he realized that he was even more proud of the people who used Canady Park.

Kevin walked out the park entrance, down Cape Hope Street, then turned left at the corner of Seventeenth Avenue. He had no destination. The moon was bright this evening; the stars were alive. A warm breeze wafted across his body then continued its journey

down the avenue. Kevin felt like he was glowing. He had plenty of glow to share and he wanted to share it with everybody.

Finally he stopped walking. This seemed like the right place for that sort of thing. He filled his lungs with cool evening air, then looked around. He stood next to a tall building. A large, well-lit sign protruded from its facade. It read, "Morrisey General Hospital." Kevin went inside.



At Canady Park the children laughed. The old men sat on the new picnic tables that the park department had brought in. People strolled under the shade of the trees and stopped to look at the flowers. Gazebos were erected along the walking trail for artisans to display their crafts.

Kevin Landstreet sat on a bench. Sunlight diffused through the leafy branches that swayed lazily above him and danced a golden tango of geometric shapes upon his shirt. He was hungry. He hadn't eaten since he had left the hospital that morning. His muscles were sore from disuse. The walk from the hospital to the park had tired him greatly. He closed his eyes.

He must have fallen asleep, for when he opened his eyes someone was seated next to him on the bench.

"Hello," said Kevin.

"Good afternoon," replied an elderly lady. She smiled at him. He smiled back.

"It's a good day to be in the park," he said.

"Most agreeable," nodded the lady. They sat quietly together on the park bench and absorbed the radiance of the day.

After a while, Kevin reached into his back pocket. He carefully unfolded a rumpled scarf then offered it to the lady. She glanced at the scarf in Kevin's hand, smiled, then said, "they say this park is haunted." She took the crumpled piece of cloth from Kevin, looked at it for a moment, then slid it into her scuffed purse.

"Not anymore," said Kevin.

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**About the author:**

Jeff Miller is a Saint Petersburg, FL based author and artist.

To learn more about the author please visit his website at:

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**A Cure For Over-thinking**

Kevin Landstreet's plight of over-thinking, which he eventually overcame, is all too real in society today. If you feel like you can't turn off all of the self defeating thoughts that run through your mind please read a free article about how I learned to deal with this problem: <http://www.suite101.com/content/a-cure-for-over-thinking-a368119>