

FAITH By Jeremy Taylor

It was one of those days that only exist in childhood memories. One day in a summer holiday that lasts forever. It had never rained - school and teachers were vague and very distant memories.

At half past eight, while I was still eating my cornflakes, Alan banged on our back door. I knew it was Alan. He always reached up and banged on the glass part of the door. Simon, the only other visitor who would bang on my back door, was content with knocking lower down.

“Look at this!” Alan thrust a newspaper in front of me. The paper was open at a page of advertisements for spare parts for cars and insurance companies.

“Look at what?” I asked, wondering what my seven year old friend wanted with car parts or insurance.

“This!” cried Alan, bubbling over with excitement.

I looked at the advert he indicated. The Belleview Naturist Camp offered a relaxing weekend at special low prices. Next to the text was a _____¹ of a woman and a man standing next to a bush. They were completely naked except for small parts of the bush which had annoyingly grown in front of the more interesting parts of _____² bodies.

“What does a naturist do?” I asked.

“Don't you know?” mocked Alan.

“Course I know. I want to know if **you** know.”

“You don't know,” said Alan.

“Do.”

“Don't.”

“Do.”

“Don't. If you know, tell me.”

¹ image, picture or photography?

² their, there or they're?

I was trapped. “It’s...it’s a man who looks after flowers and animals and whales and that sort of thing.”

Was I right? From Alan’s mocking laughter it was clear that I was _____³.
“What is it then, clever clogs?” I asked.

Alan came conspiratorially closer. “A naturist is someone who goes around in the nuddy!”

“That’s a nudist, not a naturist, stupid.”

“No, no, they’re the same thing. I asked my mum and she wouldn’t tell me so I knew it was something interesting and I looked it up in my _____⁴,” said Alan gleefully. “Nudism and naturism are the same thing!”

Wheels turned in my brain and a few of the jigsaw puzzles of life fell into place. That explained the picture of Adam and Eve and the bush. Already I was _____⁵ with Alan’s nervous excitement. The Belleview Camp was just outside Waterbridge - about six kilometres from our village. We could cycle there and back in a day. Of course we couldn’t go in but there may be a little hole in the _____⁶ somewhere. The potential rewards of the trip made my body shake with anticipation.

Under an hour later, we were approaching Waterbridge. The Belleview camp was on the road to New Wellington so we went through Waterbridge, stopping briefly to buy an ice lolly and some gobstoppers. Our supplies complete, we set off on the final _____⁷ of our journey. About half a kilometre outside Waterbridge there was a large green sign informing us that the Belleview was four hundred metres down a narrow lane. Alan and I exchanged excited smiles and set off slowly. Our heads feverish with feelings we, as yet, did not understand. We left our bicycles _____⁸ to a small tree and walked nervously towards the camp.

³ false, incorrect or wrong?

⁴ a book in which the meanings of words are explained.

⁵ attacked, ill or infected?

⁶ fence, barrier or barricade?

⁷ a part of the body, but which one?

⁸ fixed, glued or locked?

The entrance to the camp looked a bit like the entrance to a camping site. As we watched (from behind a large bush), a car pulled _____⁹. A woman got out and went to a small building next to the entrance. A minute later she came out with some papers and then drove into the camp. A naturist! The first one we had ever seen. Okay, so she was still wearing her clothes but she wouldn't be for long. Our bodies told us this was a very good reason to feel very excited and we did not let our bodies down. Ten more minutes behind the bush but no more people arrived at the Belleview camp. Alan and I went in search of a view of the garden of Eden.

The park was situated around an old gravel _____¹⁰ which had been tastefully landscaped. People stayed in small Swedish style huts dotted around the camp. Disappointingly for me and Alan, the whole park was surrounded by a large wooden fence. But surely with such a long fence there must a hole somewhere. After twenty minutes we hadn't found one. The fence was not always accessible. Sometimes, young _____¹¹ trees had been planted near the fence. I felt pangs of jealousy for future seven _____¹² olds who would simply be able to climb up these trees and get a perfect view. But surely we wouldn't be disappointed. Surely we would see something!

“Do you _____¹³ we could climb this fence?” asked Alan, obviously as frustrated as me.

“If you gave me a leg up I reckon I might be able to see over the top.”

“No, you give me a leg up, I'm taller than you.”

“It was my idea, you give me a leg up first.”

“It was my idea to come to the park.”

“I'll toss you for it,” I said, already reaching into my _____¹⁴ for a coin. I had no coins left so I took out a gobstopper, held it behind me, then showed Alan my two

⁹ in, out, up or down?

¹⁰ pat, pet, pit, pot or put?

¹¹ conifer or conifers?

¹² year or years?

¹³ believe, calculate or reckon?

¹⁴ packet, picket or pocket?

fists. He considered them both carefully before _____¹⁵ the one on the left.

Damn! He always won. Reluctantly, I crouched down so that Alan could climb onto my shoulders. Carefully, I stood up and Alan stretched towards the top of the fence.

“What do you think you're doing?”

I tried to turn round, forgetting that Alan was still on my shoulders. I tripped and we fell. Fortunately only our pride was hurt as we faced the man. “Clear _____¹⁶ kids, or I'll call the police!”

We took his _____¹⁷ and cleared off as quickly as our shaking legs would carry us. We were still young enough to believe that all adults were _____¹⁸ of authority and probably knew our parents. We unlocked our bikes and cycled back to our village.

“Did you see anything from the top of the fence?”

Alan looked at me in surprise, then he paused. “Well, _____¹⁹, just before that guy shouted at us, I did see something.”

“What?”

“Well, I can't be sure, but I reckon it was two women _____²⁰ in the sun.”

“Were they...naked?”

Alan thought. “Well, one of them was, but the other one... she... was still taking her bra off.”

“Wow!”

“You didn't see nothing, did you?”

“I did.”

“You never!”

“I did... When I was holding you up, there was this little hole in the fence...”

“There wasn't.”

¹⁵ faucetting, taping or watering?

¹⁶ away, off, out or up?

¹⁷ advice, advices, information or informations?

¹⁸ drums, symbols or triangles?

¹⁹ 'actually', 'at the moment' or 'right now'?

²⁰ laying or lying?

“There was. There was this woman. She was walking towards me. She had these great big ones, **this** big.” I let go of my handlebars to indicate to Alan just how big they had been.

“Well, actually, while I was looking at the two women, one was just taking her bra off but the other one, well, she was completely starkers! I saw everything!”

“Everything?” I questioned.

“Everything,” confirmed Alan. “In fact, she saw me looking at her.”

“She didn't.”

“She did. In fact she waved to me. In fact she said, “Come and join us!”

“She didn't.”

“She did.”

When school finally started in September of course the other boys listened in awed silence. We told them all about the hundreds of women that we had seen and the size and shapes of all their bodies. Did they believe us? Who cares? We believed.

1252 words

Copyright © 2007 Jeremy Taylor

www.jeremytaylor.eu