

Conradin was ten years old and the doctor had pronounced his professional opinion that the boy would not live another five years.

The car slipped silently and effortlessly through the countryside Clive and Emily stared ahead both unaware of the scenic views and the beauty of the warm summer's day before them. It may as well have been midwinter; a midwinter that set in at the exact moment the doctor made his pronouncement.

Not a word had passed between them since leaving the doctors office. Apart from the strains of Ravel's "Pavane pour une Enfante Défunte" being played by Classic FM on the car radio occasionally interspersed by the electronic sound effects coming from Conradin's Game Boy nothing disturbed their thinking.

Conradin sat in the back of the car intensely focussed on his Game Boy, as oblivious to the world outside the car as his parents. Emily pulled the sun visor down to check her makeup, well in truth, so she could look at Conradin in the vanity mirror. He looked no different to any other ten year old. He wore the same uniform as all the children in his peer group, blue denim jeans cut-off halfway between the knees and the ankles, black tee-shirt with a logo of some unpronounceable bad taste rock group and of course the obligatory baseball cap worn in reverse! But of course he was now very different from all the others in his peer group, though he gave no sign of it.

Conradin eventually fell asleep in the back of the car. The warmth from the sun had made him sleepy and he had drifted off, to slay the dragons which had escaped from their lairs on his Game Boy.

Clive checked the rear view mirror several times to be sure Conradin was sound asleep before breaking the verbal silence, "Well, if he has only five years we need to try and do everything and see everything, while he is still well."

"What are you thinking of?" asked Emily.

"We could sell the house and buy an RV. Then tour the world, take him to all the countries, cities, museums and do the things that it would normally take a life time to do".

"Great idea but even I can work out that we can't survive 5 years or more with no income, even with selling the house," retorted Emily.

"OK, so what do you think we should do then?" said Clive with an edge in his voice.

"Well", said Emily thoughtfully, "I was thinking of giving up work or at least only working part-time. Then I could give him more quality time".

"So, what about me?" enquired Clive. "We both earn about the same. Why shouldn't I go part time and you stay full time? After all the times you have had a go at me for seeing women in a stereotypical role, you fall straight back into it as soon as it suits your purpose"

"Mum, Dad!" Conradin's voice suddenly drifted over from the back of the car.

“Oh, sorry,” said Emily, “We didn’t mean to wake you.”

“Can I tell you what I think?” asked Conradin.

“Well, yes, go on then, tell us what you think” said Emily, a little taken aback.

“The only thing I want for my future is everything to be normal. The most important thing to me is that you will both be there for me, always, for however long my always is”.

“Oh, just one other thing, I would like to go to Disneyland.”