

The Pale White House with a Red Brimmed Door.

By Angelo Bender

When I was younger, I lived on my reservation. It was just on an offshoot of it less than a quarter of a mile away from some white town called Cutbank. As a child, I couldn't really distinguish the difference between the two but I'm sure any adult from Cutbank could, and did. It was nice though, a lot of what I can remember at least. Going back to visit now is always strange seeing just how much things have changed for better and worse. I used to live in this house in the center of the offshoot called Seville. It wasn't a very big place at all, Probably no more than 40 houses making up this area. It is some strange cul-de-sac like place with an island in the middle with houses shooting out. I lived there, on the island, in the center of it all. It was like I was the sun of this little solar system. Just across the street, and I mean directly across, is what always had my mind in a bind.

There is this ghostly pale white house with a glimmering red brimmed door that was just across from mine. Cracks and chipped paint showed its wear and age. The door, however, was untouched by the hands of time. It was his vibrant, bright apple red as far as I can remember. It was so alluring. Everyday my best friend, at the time, and I would stand outside of its chain-link fence and talk for hours about what could be inside. We came up with these grand stories about the most bizarre things lurking in there. It seemed like a world of endless possibilities. Over time, more and more children from around the block would come join us and offer their view of what could possibly be hidden behind that blood-shade trim. We had to know.

The summer of my 8th year, I found out that we would be moving away in february. It was sad for me and everyone else. There was only a few months left before I moved away. There was a time limit on how long I had to see what was behind that door now. It was the first time in my life that I truly realised how cruel time can be, and how proudly it marches. There is not a single waver in its step. Naturally, we all wanted to solve the mystery before I left in just a few short months. It took some preparation, and some courage. To a bunch of eight year olds, this house and its secrets were just as scary as they were enchanting.

We all finally mustered up the courage one frosty december day. We put on our warmest clothes, took some tools from my mother's vast collection, and one by one made our way over the chain-link fence. It didn't matter. We couldn't get the door open. Courage and might mattered not because we were all outsmarted by how doors function. You can't just unscrew the hinges front the outside like we thought, nor did we have the strength required to just bust it down. So after sulking for a while, we made our way back to our houses. All giving up on that childish dream we all carried for the past year.

Not long after that, I moved away. It was hard adjusting to a new school and people, but I got it eventually. Years passed by and I forgot all about that abandoned house. I would still visit my family in Seville and Cutbank, of course, but I guess I just lost interest in some dumb fantasy as I grew. I think that is something a lot of people can relate to. I think the next time I truly thought about that childhood dream of mine was the July before I turned 17. I

was telling my two best friends about my reservation and trying to convince them to go there with me oneday. It was Indian days that week, and luckily my close friend Mae wanted a dog from my aunt, she runs a rescue on my reservation. We woke up early the next day, quickly readied ourselves, and set out on our adventure.

It was a long trip. We spent the majority of the day driving from place to place. 3 hours just to get to Cutbank and another 40 minutes to Browning, the capital of the Blackfeet rez. I spent the time mostly thinking to myself. Gazing out into the distance from the front seat of Mae's car. My best friend, Dylan, was sitting in the back. It was an extraordinary day, its beauty lingers in my mind even now. We visited my family once we arrived and headed on our way to see The Grand Opening of Indian days. We walked around the fair, and watched my sister, along with thousands of other dancers dance. My friends were absolutely mesmerized, they have never seen such a sight before.

Before we knew it, the sun was already just beginning to set. We said goodbye to my family at the fair, and headed back to Seville and Cutbank to say our final goodbyes to everyone before we left. Mae picked out her dog from my aunt, we thanked her and were off on our way. Driving around the island, I saw the house that always seemed to call to me a child. I had to yell at Mae to stop the car. I stood outside the chain-link fence just as I did as a child, best friends at my side, and looked up at that towering house. I basked in its beautiful horror for just a second, then jumped the fence. They both knew the story about this house as I have told them once before. They followed suit, and we just stood at the door. I once had the thought that I wanted to know what was behind the locked gate, that I had to know. I told them we should go get some tools, but Mae said to just wait there. She came back from her car moments later carrying the small locking picking kit she always carries around. We had used it multiple times before to unlock the door to Dylan's house when he was sleeping and we couldn't get in.

Mae fiddled with the lock for just a few seconds. It wasn't really anything difficult for them to open, I think it was a bit sad that it wasn't more of a struggle.. I've always been a romantic so I told them to close their eyes and take some paces away from the door. I opened the door, my head turned behind me as I did. I ran to join them. Eyes opened, my back facing the door. I told them on the count of three we would sprint in, however, I never got to that final number. Everything in my body was telling me I had to go, so on two, I went.

Sprinting into the house, the other two taking a second to realise what happened, looked around in awe. It was exactly what I thought it would be. An empty, abandoned house with dust and cobwebs as decor. I don't think I felt disappointed in that fact, not as much as I thought I would. Being able to think it through a much older age, I knew what would be inside. That childhood dream of a magic world was long dead, so I was able to appreciate it for what it really was, to me at least. I was joined inside by my best pals. I was now hunched down crying because I finally got to know. I sat there for an eternity basking in the emptiness. I felt complete by it, or that I completed it. It was getting dark and I knew we had to go home. I said a final goodbye, looked back at the creepy room, and locked the door behind me. We stopped at my grandparents' place a few minutes away, we all shared a warm meal, and we were off.

That trip back was a quiet one. We were all exhausted from a long day, and my mind was too preoccupied to talk. One of my childhood dreams was now finally realised. I felt empty, and whole all at once. I spent the ride trying to figure out what it all meant, while looking at the beautiful sights that passed us by. Time doesn't stop for anything, it just continues to march forward. I couldn't go back and undo or redo that day, I just had to continue. It really donned on me then that maybe some dreams should just stay as dreams, but we never really know what dreams should just stay dreams until we go for it.

I can tell myself that over and over again, but I still don't know.