

Louis White

Sandcastles



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A story by Louis White

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*This book is dedicated to Princess Buttercup. May she one day find the
courage to let go of the past and look to the future with hope.*



Day 1: Sunday (Childhood)

Lisa-Mae was tired. She was always tired. Despite the fact that the sun was shining, there was blue sky outside and it was just a stone's throw to the ocean, she felt no enthusiasm for the day.

She had been lazing in bed all day like a sloth and avoided contact with any human being except through her phone. Lisa-Mae loved her phone and couldn't go five minutes without checking to see if someone had emailed or texted her. Even if she didn't respond, she liked to know that people needed her. It made her feel important and without it she could not see how she could possibly function. Her phone was her lifeline.

It was now getting into the late afternoon and Lisa-Mae could hear the streets were still buzzing with the sound of summer approaching. She decided that she should leave the comfort of her bed and at least look outside. After all, what harm could it do, and her phone would be in her hand all the time.

The big house she lived in was empty. All the guests and family members had left for the day to get outside and have some fun. But Lisa-Mae was far too busy and important to waste a whole day having fun. I mean, what if she got a very important call or email and wasn't able to respond? No, she couldn't go an hour without the need to be on her phone.

As Lisa-Mae looked out the window she saw a Rainbow Lorikeet. She was amazed at its beauty and momentarily forgot about her very important world, letting her phone slip onto the table. Unlike most Rainbow Lorikeets, this bird had no partner and didn't make a noise, and it seemed to be staring straight at her.



Carefully and slowly Lisa-Mae opened the patio doors so as to get closer to this wonderful creature. The closer she got, the more the bird seemed to stare straight at her and Lisa-Mae was fascinated by its colours – bright green, red, blue and yellow.

She was now within a metre of the bird when it turned and flew up and slightly to the left, swirling around and looking down at Lisa-Mae as if to invite her to follow.

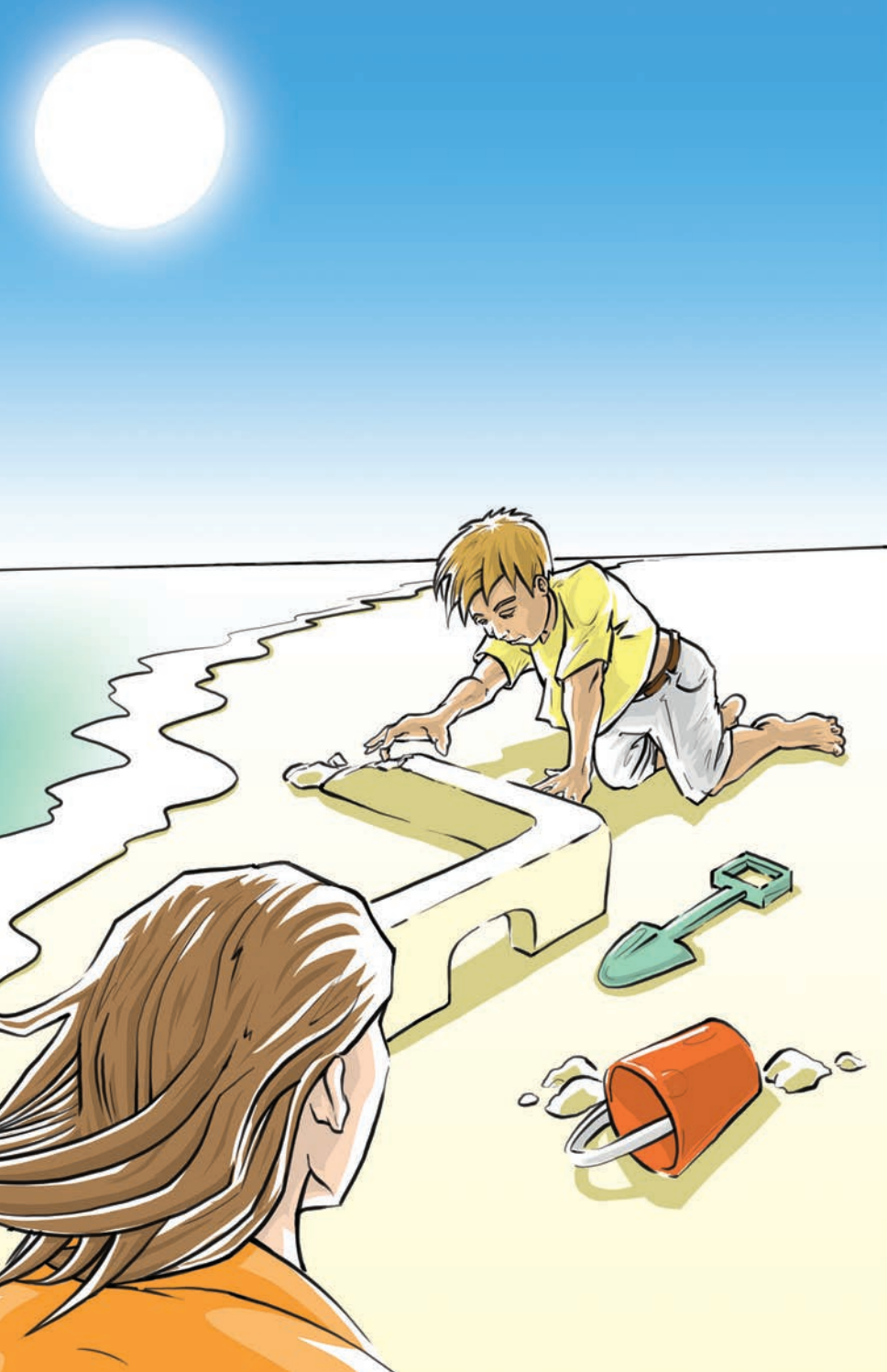
Lisa-Mae followed the Rainbow Lorikeet down the side path of the house and out to the street. She slowly followed the bird; it was never more than five metres from her and never made a sound. She soon lost track of where she was, away from the crowds and walking along an unfamiliar path. Where was she going?

She had lost all concept of time. Was it five minutes or an hour she had been walking? Nonetheless, her interest in



the Rainbow Lorikeet had not diminished. Its colours were mesmerising and she couldn't take her eyes away from it. It was like she was in a trance.

Suddenly, the Rainbow Lorikeet took off, squawking loudly. Lisa-Mae's head spun round and round as she tried to follow



its circles in the sky, but soon the bird had disappeared. Lisa-Mae caught her breath and looked to see where she was.

Much to her amazement she found she was standing on a secluded beach. A beach she had never seen before and as beautiful as one could imagine. The sand was white and pristine, the ocean bluer than blue and the skies looked friendlier than ever. What a magical place she had discovered, and all to herself.

She couldn't stop smiling.

She started to walk slowly along the beach, soaking in its loveliness, when she saw something in the distance. She was unsure at first, but upon closer inspection she realised someone was making a sandcastle.

Lisa-Mae increased her pace and saw a little blond-haired, blue-eyed boy with a spade and bucket digging away at the sand.

“What are you doing?” she asked quizzically.

“Building a sandcastle,” said the boy as he diligently went about his work.

“What kind of sandcastle are you building?”

“A big one with plenty of rooms.”

The boy had not deviated from his task and continued to fill and empty the bucket and shape the sandcastle with his hands. He had not once looked up at Lisa-Mae, who stood watching, admiring the pleasure the boy was taking from his craft, when the boy stopped.

“I have now finished my first room,” he said proudly.

“Come and have a look.”

Lisa-Mae smiled and bent over as the boy retreated into the background.

She pretended to look inside the window and admire his craftsmanship when the boy said: “You need to look inside the window.”

Lisa-Mae smiled again, this time more out of politeness, but

out of respect for what the boy had built she got down on one knee and peered inside the window.

From there Lisa-Mae was transported into her childhood. The room was full of images and memories, from when she was a baby through to her early teenage years.

But Lisa-Mae didn't see a child, she saw an adult pretending to be a child. She saw music lessons, language lessons, school lessons, religious lessons, sport lessons, and in fact everything was a lesson. All around her adults telling her what to do and constant instruction on what she should be doing all the time.

Suddenly, the Rainbow Lorikeet appeared beside her.

“Now, Lisa-Mae, do you see what we have here?”

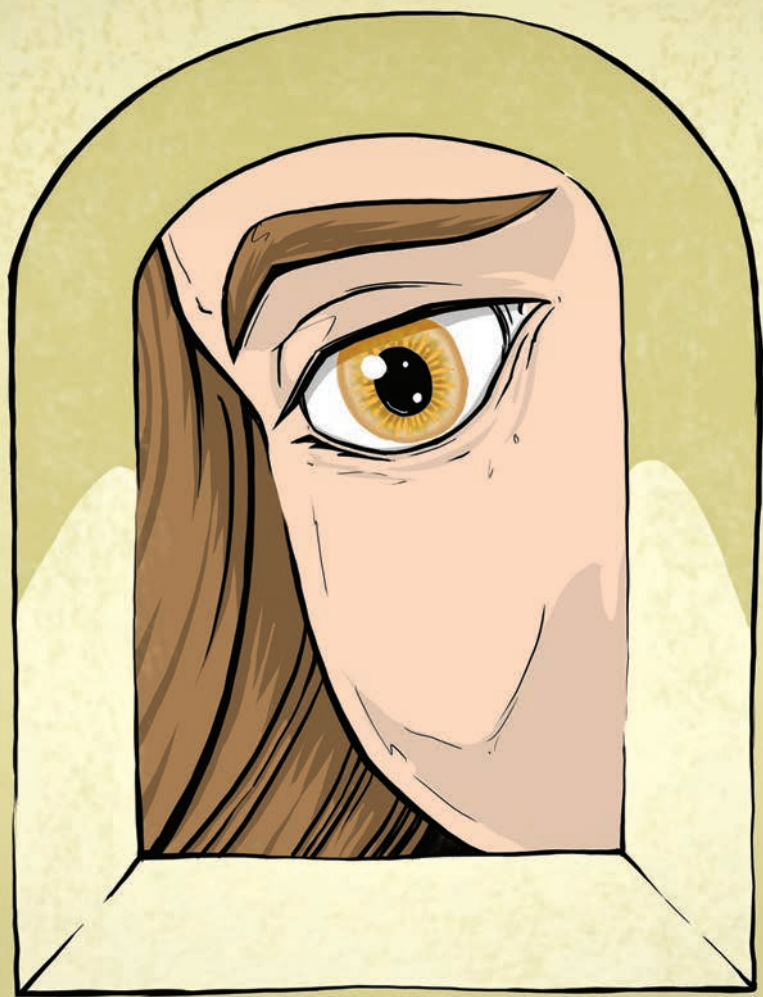
Lisa-Mae couldn't understand what was happening but thought it best just to nod.

“Your childhood was a complex childhood. Your loving parents wanted you to explore your talents through hard work and discipline, as did your teachers because they thought they knew what was best for you. They wanted structure and a future for you that they considered to be in your best interests.

“But doesn't the child already know more than the adult? Doesn't the child already know what is right and wrong? What tastes good and what doesn't? What they like doing and what they don't? What makes them happy and what makes them sad? Doesn't a child simply fall asleep when it's tired rather than fight through it like adults do?”

“The child's conscience is clear and innocent and is only corrupted by adults. Children are naturally curious and want to explore all in front of them to see what something feels and tastes like. They want to discover the endless possibilities of a new-found object.

“Adults around the world need to let children learn through their natural curiosity with objects, animals, foods and the like while assisting them with guidance and understanding, as their



brain develops and encompasses all that is around.

“Most childhoods around the world involve structured learning from a young age. Some natural, some forced. But we must let a child be a child and children be children. There must be spontaneity and there must be time for a child to simply explore on its own with no adult present.

“Yes, there is love and nurturing for children but often it is misplaced and this has left many children misplaced in the world today. But it is not too late for the world of adults to change their teaching methods.”

Lisa-Mae looked up at the Rainbow Lorikeet, who soon started speaking directly at her.

“All is not lost,” the bird said. “Those disciplines you learnt as a child can serve you well today in other areas, and that spontaneity you so badly crave is within you at any second.

“The silliness, the random laughter, the craziness, the freedom that every child seeks is very much within you and is part of you, and as you know, has been recently activated.

“Never forget the foundations upon which one has been built and never forget that they can be used to benefit you in later life in different forms, even though it may not be obvious at the time.”

With those final words the Rainbow Lorikeet flew away and Lisa-Mae was suddenly standing alone on the beach far away from the sandcastle. She looked around and couldn't see the boy and wondered what had happened. Was it a dream?

Lisa-Mae suddenly grew weary and felt the need to lie down. As she turned to her right she saw a beautiful big oak tree surrounded by fresh green grass. She couldn't believe her luck as it was only a short distance away.

She walked in a leisurely way to the oak tree trying to comprehend what had just happened. She lay beneath the tree and found it very comfortable. Soon she was fast asleep.

