

#3 p1

The Decision

The dim flicker of the fluorescent lights and the buzzing of the worn out freezers help block out the thoughts of what I'm about to do. I pull up my hood before passing the first security camera. Seeing the box of butter, I gently slide it into my pocket. Before I can even close the fridge door, I hear the cock of a shotgun. "Turn around!" I hear Jimmy, the store owner shout. I slowly turn around with my hands up. I keep my head down to hide my shame. "Look me in eye you little punk," he sputters with anger. Hastily I look up at him. I notice his face is now covered in surprised. "...Tyrone? Are you kidding me!"

Jimmy cautiously puts the shotgun down and comes closer. He puts his hand in my pocket and rips out the butter. "Why are you doing this Tyrone?" He snaps with the butter in my face. "My mom needs it," I stammer, pushing it away. "Now, I have known Simone since we were youngsters and she would never approve of stealing. And take that stupid hood down," he commanded. I raise my hands to take my hood down and watch as he starts to think about what to do with me. Am I going to be arrested? What about Mother and little Lexi? They can't take care of themselves, especially now that Mom has been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. "You know I would normally send thieves right to jail, but... I will let this one slide," Jimmy began. "Now don't you go thinking that I would just let you off too easy!" He grunts as he makes his way to the storage room. "Follow me," he says sternly.

I make my way down the aisle, right behind him. Jimmy opens the door to a small office space with other boxes. He searches around the drawers, what kind of punishment could he be

looking for in a drawer? "Ah, there they are," he says holding a stack of papers. "Now this here are job applications, and the next time you come in here you best have one filled out." Jimmy hands me a packet and says, "Now get out of here before I do call the cops." But right before I leave the store Jimmy shouts, "Hey look up the Rotary Club's Four-Way Test on the internet!" What did he say, Rotary Club's Four-Way Test? Once I am I crumble up the paper and put it in my pocket. Does he really think I want a job?

"Tyrone?" My mom weakly asks as I enter the house. "Yes ma?" I replied. "Fetch me some water would you please? And where have you been?" she quietly asked. I go into the kitchen, looking around the cluttered area for a bottle. How am I supposed to find anything with all these bills and trash everywhere? I open the fridge to find only one water bottle and eggs left. "Here," I murmur as I hand her the water. "I was caught up at school, sorry ma." I slouch down in the dusty couch, sighing. "Okay...what is that?" She mutters, pointing at a ball of paper on the floor. "Oh, nothing." I quickly get up and pick up the up job application. How did that get there?

I make my way back to my room and sit on my small bed. Why did he give me this stupid application anyway? I crumble up the papers again and throw it at the wall. "What was that?" I look up to find my little sister, Lexi, leaning in the doorway. "Nothing," I groan as I shut the door on her.

The screeching noise of the alarm clock wakes me up. I slowly arise from bed and open my closet to find a total of eight shirts, each from the church. I put a random shirt on, with one of my only clean pair of pants. Next I grab my shoes, black sneakers with a growing hole on the left foot. I look at myself in the mirror. I wish I had nicer clothing, or at least shoes without holes in them!

#3 p 3

Sitting at my lunch table with my few friends, I turn to see two girls staring at me. I hear them whisper, "didn't he wear that last week?" and "what a loser." I'm sick of this, I sigh to myself. I do need a change. I can't keep doing this. Not only does ma and Lexi deserve better, so do I!

I head to the school library, in other words, my only source of the Internet. I get on a computer and look up, 'Four-Way Test.' A ton of websites, and I click on the Wikipedia link. Oh my, why does this thing have a Wikipedia. I scroll down past all the information to find four questions, *Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships?* and *Will it be beneficial to all concerned?* Okay...is stealing truth? Who even asks these questions, of course not it's cowardly. But we need food! "*Is it fair to all concerned,*" well I guess not. How would I feel if someone was taking my stuff without paying? Oh poor Jimmy, he does not deserve this. Also anyone else who I have stolen from doesn't deserve it. I can't keep doing this. I deserve a future. Alright, third question, "*will it build goodwill and better friendships?*" No, stealing will definitely not build goodwill and better friendships. Mom always told me that stealing is the easy way out, and that I need to earn my things. If I found out one of my friends were stealing I wouldn't trust them. Okay, almost over. "*Will it be beneficial to all concerned?*" Absolutely not! After reading all these questions I feel so bad. Ma, Lexi, and even Jimmy do not deserve this.

Once I get home I walk straight to my room and grab the job application and fill it out. I'm finally making the right choice. I go out to the living room, "Be right back ma," and give her a kiss on the cheek. I leave our small apartment, and make my way to Jimmy's General Store. Wait is this worth it? What if he laughs at me and doesn't hire me? Right as I walk in I can see

the tension on Jimmy's face. I pull out the application and nervously hand it to him, catching a glimpse of surprise on his face. "You're hired," he announces. "But you didn't even read the paper?" I question. "The fact that you even came back gives me the confidence to hire you," Jimmy explains as he pats my shoulder. He exhales and says, "Now your future begins son." Then his face suddenly got serious, "but I will still be keeping an eye on you son." I smile a little, "You have nothing to worry about sir! When do I start?" Jimmy laughs to himself, "tomorrow, and here is your uniform."

When I get home I sit on the couch and notice a single tear on my cheek. "What is wrong honey?" My mom murmured. "Nothing, I got a job mom at Jimmy's!" I proclaim happily. At first her face showed pride, but quickly became flustered. "But why?" she asked angrily. "We have the disability check!" If she only knew. "Mom, it is not even \$2,000! That barely gets us enough food, let alone pays the bills. I am keeping this job, we need it!" She looks proud yet worried, "You are my son. You shouldn't have to worry about the finances of an adult. And what about your education?" I sigh, "Mom everything is okay! I work after school. Also we need this ma. And you need help, you can't just sit here all day!"

That was about five years ago, and I have never made a better choice. I am now being true to myself and thinking about others. Working for things instead of stealing has given me goodwill, and surprisingly have more stable relationships with people. Lexi is even doing better in school, all A's! Also I can now afford mother a specialist for her multiple sclerosis. By making one right decision I completely changed my life. I am now even the manager Jimmy's General Store! If I would never have turned in the application I could be in jail.