

# Creative story for belonging

Family



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Jim left the taxi as it bellowed dust when it left taxi the gazed on the side of the dirt road and saw the farm where he grew up, it was old and bare, like an African village, the animals were thin from the drought. As Jim walked down to the gate, his childhood memories came flooding back and he hung his head in disbelief at the state of the farm. “ Hey son! Come in.” Jim continued to the brick farmhouse, greeted by his father, 6ft with a beard of a trucker, an old cane beside him to help keep him up. Jim walked past the 2 dogs sleeping on the porch oblivious of Jim arrival. As Jim opened the door he was confronted with old newspapers stacked in a pile, abandoned rooms throughout the house, faint lines of moments in time etched on the doorframe causing feelings of joy helping him overcome his despair at the state of the farm.

He sat at the dining table to see a deed to the land, signed and ready to be sent. “ So you were serious about selling it?” Jim asked. “ You bloody tell me!” Barry retorted. Jim paused for a moment, but stood up and proceeded to make some dinner. The room faded white on the walls with worn hardwood tops. The gas stove old and abandoned, replaced by the microwave as if new always replaced the old. There was a frame of Shelia, the mother of the house; black and white, young and a teeming farm behind her, on the wall in front of the sink full of old dirty dishes. “ Those were the days.” Jim muttered with a faint smile.

He walked to the freezer to grab 2 frozen meals, then proceeding to heat them up, as Barry limped to his chair falling into his seat. “ This wouldn’t have happened if it would just rain.” Barry confronted. “ Maybe this winter?” Jim asked with hope, as he put the meals on, filling the room with the aroma

of roast chicken and vegetables “ That’s what I say to myself, but it seems the gods have left me to rot.” Barry sighed. “ Well eat up, we have a long flight tomorrow” Jim suggested. “ City people think everything has no meaning and you can just move on” Barry argued. “ Dad, I never changed, I wanted to be here but I couldn’t, not after mum died. It hurt us all not just you” Jim retorted. Barry looked up and into Jim’s eyes, eyes of pain and sadness, “ I'm sorry” Barry muttered as he looked down in sorrow.

Jim left, ignoring his dinner in frustration and headed upstairs to pack, leaving Barry to eat alone. Starting with the master bedroom, a large wooden king size bed sat in the middle, one side untouched for many years, the wardrobe filled with dusty women’s clothes. As if Barry could never let go. As Jim cleaned the room he noticed a feedbag under the bed labeled “ Jim’s lucky feedbag”. Memories poured into Jim, of his childhood, Jim sat there motionless, on the bed with the feedbag in his hand fixed on the bag.

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I ran over to dad with my feedbag spilling feed everywhere, Dad looked up and smiling at me proud of his son, young and full of energy. I grabbed my feed and began to feed the cows with dad, mum watching in the distance on her rocking chair as father and son worked together to feed the livestock. We walked back to the farmhouse with Missy and Steve by our sides to be welcomed by a heart-warming roast chicken and vegetables.

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Barry finished the dinner and sat on the couch to drone his old and tired mind, passing the channels “ Farmer Wants a Wife”, “ NCIS”, “ CSI Miami”

then the news came on channel 7, “ In latest news; the drought looks like it might end with rain expected to come in heavy amounts this winter” the news reporter announced. “ Yes! Finally! The day ha-“ Barry fell, like an old tree crashing down in its forest, clutching his heart, scared and afraid.

“ Hey dad why did you keep this?” Jim asked as he ran down the stairs with the feedbag. “ Dad?” Jim called. “ Dad where are you?” Jim called again. “ Help,” whispered a voice. Jim ran to the living room to find his dad on the floor fading away. “ No, please don’t, I don’t want to be alone, you’re all I have.” Jim pleaded. “ Don’t worry ... the house will always keep company ... the rain is coming ... the farm will be saved!” Barry comforted. “ Please no, no, no, I will keep the farm running, I promise.” Jim whispered reassuring. Barry closed his eyes with closure that he knew that the house would live on and his struggles would not be in vain.

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Behind the old farmhouse, Mum and dad, loved the spot where the morning sun broke over the hill, lighting the fields below. Here they lay to rest eternally together. Jim waked to the headstones “ In loving memory of my beloved father. Dedicated farmer with the heart of an elephant. Barry Henderson 1939 - 2013” He muttered. Laying down a bouquet of wildflowers on both his mother’s and father’s graves.

Jim walked around to the porch and sat in the chair unsure of what he was going to do. Jim bent down to see what the new dogs’ names were. “ Missy and Steve, he was a tough one to let go.” Jim smirked. They knew what happened and were afraid also. Jim looked down to the deed ripped it up

with happiness. Looked to the paddock as a rain drop slid down the banister to Jim's hand as he looked with the same confidence his father always shown into the farm he now owns.