

The Journal of Jake Fontaine

June 3rd

This was a lot less silly when I was eight and they made me do it in school, but Dr. MacNamara said it would help with the healing process. You get it out on paper and then it's not in your head. Like writing a letter you never send. I wouldn't take it so seriously but Farah used to do just that. It's probably why he went that way. To manipulate me into doing it.

It's been a year since Farah passed. Lawson is doing okay. Better than me, I guess. No, not guess. He is. He knows when I'm having trouble and he just waits. I have trouble with breakfast or we're out and there is just too much going on at once and the anger sets in and he just waits. That's Farah right there. It's certainly not me. I'm glad she was around long enough to leave that sort of imprint on our son. I'm gonna work hard to protect that.

I'll be honest since that's what this is for. The move was awful. Even with that old house being crammed to the gills with memories, moving was a shitshow I wish I could have avoided. I had to get out of that house so I could stop hearing her voice. Catching whiffs of her scent. The Doc was right though, I was developing some bad coping mechanisms and I didn't want to give them to Lawson.

The new place is really nice though. A little three bedroom so I can have an office. A big backyard with no fucking trees! I love you, Baby, but I hate leaves.

I might stop now. Why did he tell me I had to write this in pen?

June 4th

So there might be something to this whole free emotional writing thing. Since it's in pen, I can see where I slip. I can't just erase it. The good doctor impresses me with his foresight.

Lawson is getting settled in. Since his room is next to the office he has the same view of the backyard I do. He misses your the tree in the backyard. I told him if I don't have to rake leaves in the fall, I'll have more time to play with him. He accepted that. I can tell his misses the old house, but I was able to keep him in the same school district so he wasn't uprooted too badly by my needs.

The neighbors are nice folks. The old couple next door took a real shine to my boy. Their kids are way out in Maine and only visit during the holidays so they seem pretty lonesome. I'm fine with it. Nothing wrong with surrogate old folks. Especially if they bake for fun. I think the old lady, Elly I think, is greek. Everything is butter and sugar with her it seems. How her husband isn't diabetic, I have no idea.

June 8th

Lawson was getting stir crazy so we checked out the park. It's at the end of the street and decently active so it seems safe enough. Big pond, lots of birds and folks during the day. Charlie, the old man next door, said it attracts a lot of wildlife for some reason, so it would be smart to steer clear of it at night since the animals are pretty acclimated to humans and can be pushy. The park is pretty big and he said there is a coyote den somewhere in it, so I should be wary if I have any little critters. Besides Law, I don't, so I'm not worried.

There were a lot of ducks, which Lawson thought was just bananas. It was really nostalgic watching him out there. I promised to bring him back with some feed next week for them. While we were walking around the park to get a feel for the place we saw this crazy looking tree. It was like a weeping willow, but the leaves were really full and thick. The hanging vines were super thin and reddish-brown with these really nice smelling flowers. They reached all the way to the ground. I figure if they were thicker kids would be swinging on them Tarzan style. I've never seen one like it before. It made some great shade though. The bed of grass beneath it looked lusher than the rest outside its canopy. I could just see us sitting under it like the old days before-

Caught myself slipping there.

June 9th

I asked Charlie about that tree in the park since I can't stop thinking about it. I hoped he would know since he's been living here for so long. He said he wasn't sure about it.

The tree was thick enough around that I don't think I could get my arms halfway around it. It had to have been there for ages. When I pointed that out, Charlie laughed and told me there had been a renovation of the park a few years back. The park used to be an offshoot of the nearby woods, but the city cleared it out due to some unsavory types and rowdy teens hanging out there and bringing the value of the neighborhood down. He guesses it was always there and it was so nice they built a park around it.

Charlie asked me why I was so interested in that tree. I opened up a little about how much my wife had loved trees and that it was exactly the kind of thing she'd have dove into. I think Charlie picked up something from the tone of my voice and patted my shoulder. He said you sounded nice. I told him you were.

June 15th

Dr. Macnamara said he worries that I'm shifting between talking about you and talking too you in the journal. He said it's fine to use it as an outlet to talk to you. Just not to do it outside of the journal. It's meant to be an outlet for those thoughts, so I'm gonna just relax here.

So, your son was petting a coyote today. It scared the hell out of me. We were at the park again and I found myself sketching for the first time in ages. I was sketching that tree when I looked up to see Lawson had found the kinky spot on a coyote. It wasn't little either. It was huge. Like, take down a german shepherd big. When I walked over, it just looked at me and loped off.

I warned Lawson about getting too close to strange dogs, but Lawson said it was

chasing butterflies and he wanted to help. It got away into the tree though. He said he was going to go after it, but the dog stopped him and just rolled over for belly rubs in the sunlight. Your son really is a child of nature. Just like you were. Coyotes chasing butterflies. I guess he can spin a tale.

June 16th

Something odd happened today.

Lawson wanted to go to the park and pick some flowers from the tree. He said that it smelled just like you. I hadn't realized it until he said something, but he was right. It really does. We went to the park and he ran ahead to the tree. He had my old notebook satchel so he could collect his flowers. When I got there though, he was standing stock still under the tree looking at something. Well, he wasn't under it, but just outside the edge of the canopy. He picked something up and put it in the satchel.

Just as I was about to ask him what he found, that coyote from before came flying at him like a bat outta hell. I broke into a sprint and snatched Law up before it could get to him. The thing stopped with almost unnatural agility and spun to face us. It started to whine and slowly advance on us.

I noticed at this point it has something of an ugly, hairless lump on its back the size of a grapefruit. It was mottled and brown and seemed almost to have grown over the top of its fur. The canine's back twitched irregularly around the lump like it was irritating him. Was this the same coyote from yesterday? It was the same massive size, but it was acting so aggressive. Was it that lump?

As I backed away into the shaded canopy of the tree, the smell of the flowers overwhelmed me and it felt like you were there with me. I felt so much braver. I wasn't gonna let some crazed mutt hurt our baby boy.

I shouted at the dog to back off. The Coyote barked back. It almost sounded frustrated.

I thought I had cowed it, but I realized it was something else. It wouldn't step into the shade of the tree. It sat on its haunches and just stared at me. Its eyes weren't crazed. They almost seemed intelligent. Its eyes seemed to flick towards Lawson, who had started to wiggle around in my grip almost making me lose my footing on the strangely soft, root laced earth. Had Lawson taken something from this dog?

I asked Lawson if he did. He said no. I asked him to open the satchel for me. Lawson opened the satchel and showed me it was full of flower petals.

I looked back at the dog who seemed to be suddenly patient. Its ruff was still twitching irregularly. I shook my head at him and firmly said No.

After a tense moment, its ears swiveling around, it stood, sniffed the ground, looked at me again, and ran away.

We might avoid the park for a while.

June 18th.

I saw that Coyote outside last night. It was prowling around the backyard after dark last night. I caught a glimpse of it after Lawson went to bed. If I still had a gun, I might have gone and handled it directly, but instead, I just went out and banged some pans at it. It left, but really only went to the end of the street towards the park.

I could see it there. Sitting on its haunches and just looking at me. What the hell does it want?

June 19th

Now Lawson is acting strange.

When I asked him for my satchel back he made up an excuse about not having a good place to keep his petals yet. When I offered to get him a mason jar for them, he got unusually dodgy about it. I decided not to push it.

I also think he's talking to himself. Did I make him sick? He was talking to someone in his room last night, but when I poked my head in, he said he was just reading. He hasn't read out loud since he was six.

I'll call the Doc tomorrow. I'm sorry, Farah.

June 20th

Dr. Macnamara said that it's not so strange for a boy Lawson's age to talk to imaginary friends, especially since he saw me talking to you before. A child's mind isn't that dangerously complex that an overactive imagination is a threat in and of itself. I'm thankful for that, but why is he hiding it?

I'm going to watch him for a few days to see what happens.

June 22nd

I'm not sure how to say this without sounding crazy, though I suppose that ship has sailed.

Lawson found a faerie. Or a pixie. I'm not sure what the difference is.

I'd been listening really hard at his door the last couple nights and I realized that I wasn't just hearing Lawson. I was hearing something responding to him, something that sounded like a female voice.

After two days of this, I decided to bust him. I opened the door and catch him looking into the satchel and talking. He closed it quickly, but in that way where you might move your hand as though you are scared of crushing something. More heel of the palm than fingers, you know?

I marched over and picked the satchel up. I didn't bother asking. When I looked

inside, hidden among the loose petals was a tiny woman. She was trying to shield herself with the flower petals, but she was clearly there.

I wasn't sure what was happening. I'd have thought I was hallucinating, but Lawson saw her as well. Hell, he saw her first.

Lawson must have grown concerned at my prolonged silence because he started to apologize and begged me not to hurt her.

I assured him I wouldn't. Why would I? She looked terrified. I also noticed she looked hurt. Lawson seemed to have put a small bandaid on her leg and she was laying in a way to keep pressure off it.

That's when she spoke. Her voice was like a chime ringing both inside and outside my head. She explained that she was being hunted by a monster dog and its master, a horrible little goblin. She said he was a small, ugly thing, brown in color and would ride the dog to hunt her and her sisters. They were only safe under the shade of their tree.

I thought back to the Coyote that had attacked Lawson. I thought about how it had stayed away from the shade of that tree and how it had that strange, ugly, brown lump on its back. The lump that wasn't there before.

I wanted to help her, just like Lawson did, which is why he picked her up and hid her from me. When I was distracted by the dog, he was pulling petals off the hanging vines to throw in the bag in case I looked. That's the me in him. Duplicitous little mouse.

The Faerie didn't have a name. She informed me she would know when she was being talked too and respond. She said that as long as the goblin was loose she and her sisters wouldn't be safe and couldn't continue to bless the park. She asked me to rid her of the goblin. Goblins were cowardly and easily killed, but she was hurt and helpless.

I don't want to fail to help anyone else, Farah. So I'm going to kill this thing for her. I wasn't able to help you, but this I can do.

June 23rd

It's done. It was a lot easier than I expected.

The coyote had been hanging around the house nonstop since Lawson brought the faerie home from the park. It wasn't particularly aggressive, but I was positive it would have its master on its back. It kept a low profile during the day, but it was there. So I decided to talk to Charlie next door about it. I left out my primary concern and simply gave the facts. I was worried about this monster coyote and wanted to know what I should do. As expected, the old man offered me a pistol. If an animal is that unafraid of humans and is hanging around your house, what more is there to do?

I felt terrible about it. It was after dark. The coyote was skulking in the back yard when I walked out the backdoor to confront it. It stopped and sat on its haunches, looking at me with those same intelligent eyes. It was too dark to see if the goblin was on it's back, but I figured even if it wasn't I needed to sort the dog out.

Right as I was steeling myself to, frankly, murder this creature in cold blood, it barked. It was a deafening sound that filled the air. It made me flinch as I fired in its direction, but I don't know if I hit it or not. In that moment, it was gone.

Lawson screamed for me. His voice filled with terror. I turned on my heels and bolted into the house. I tore down the hallway to Lawson's room and slammed the door open.

There, at the foot of Lawson's bed was a little, brown, ugly thing. It was like a man with long, skinny arms and legs. Its head was oversized and sported a hooked nose and long pointed ears. Its skin was like burned brown rubber, covered in little bumps and knobs. It was wearing a furry loincloth and cape. Both the color of the coyote. The lump I'd seen before was just its head. It blended in with the fur on his canine mount. It was carrying a simple looking little knife that, even at his size, I could tell was made to be that size. It wasn't some makeshift weapon, made with a needle, like I had in my head, but a little thing that looked forged.

It snarled in frustration as I locked eyes with it. It looked at the gun in my hand and then to the side for a moment as if considering something. It seemed to resign itself to

something with a shake of its head. It raised its free hand and spoke, his voice a rasping, guttural thing, that while it rang both inside and outside my head like the faerie's, it was nowhere as clean or pretty.

“You kill, you die. Pup die.”

He then pointed to Lawson, who was desperately clutching the Faerie to protect her. He started to speak again, but the Faerie's voice rang out over the top of it. She was screaming to kill it louder than whatever it was saying.

The Goblin seemed to have heard her too. It's face twisted in rage. It spun with terrifying speed and flung the dagger. I fired the gun.

The Goblin was torn in half by the shot even as his dagger bit into Lawson's fingers. He dropped the Faerie who landed softly on the bed at his side.

I was stunned. It was over. We'd done it.

The Faerie scrambled over to the dead Goblin and thrust her hands into the gore of his body, throwing tiny fistfuls of viscera onto herself before reaching over her shoulder and rubbing it on her back. Two gossamer wings rapidly grew from the spots. She tore off the bandaid and rubbed its blood into her wounded leg, which also healed in a miraculous manner.

As she healed, I thought for a moment, just a moment, that the whole ordeal was grotesque. She seemed to be talking to herself, but unlike the other times, I couldn't hear her voice properly.

She grabbed the Goblin by one arm and one leg and launched herself into the air. I wouldn't have thought her able to carry anything with those tiny wings. She said she needed to return with the goblin's body so her sisters would know it was dead, but she'd be back tomorrow.

Something is sitting funny with me though. Why did that Goblin threaten me like that? I mean, he died without any trouble. I bet Lawson could have handled it with his bare hands if he wasn't such a gentle child. It was odd.

June 24th

Farah, the house smells just like you again. The Faerie came back and she brought a bunch of her sisters. They all smell like you. They brought sprig from the park tree with them. They want to give me a gift as a thank you for getting rid of that goblin that was hunting them so they offered to plant a tree in the backyard. They said that their home was like a prison, but now they were free and they have me to thank. They asked us to help with the planting since the trees grow fast in the right situations. We have to do it tonight while it's dark. It's a secret, just for me and Lawson.

Talk again soon.