

# Deep in Thought

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The rain stopped after a whole night drenching the road. The window was opened, I feel the suffocating air around my room. Staring at the raindrops falling from the leaves, occupied my mind for a moment. So beautiful when I see the water droplets on the leaves slowly falling to the ground. "Son, did you just wake up?" Suddenly, her voice broke my concentration. "Yes, Mom," I said, leaving the beautiful scenery. "Let's go down soon, we should have our breakfast together," Mother asked me to hurry.

"Leon, how is your preparation for your art show?" Dad asked me while he spreads peanut butter on his toast. "Yup it's good, Dad," I said. My father is a lecturer at one of the leading universities. Meanwhile, my mother volunteering herself as an environmental activist. I am just the only child who lives among academic families that upheld norms, ethics, and manners.

Since I was a kid, my parents educated me to be a great child. Participated in various kinds of training, studied some sports and arts, involved in every activity held by my parents. I became superior in all fields. Every parent who knows me will praise me and makes me a perfect figure for their children. Of course, it was all planned by my parents. I have to be perfect because I am their only child.

Having a myriad of most amazing achievements, there are some things that I unconsciously took away from me. I have never experienced childhood like other children that play and run with their friends or else, climbing trees then falling from them. But because I'm a great kid, even though I never feel that way I'm very approachable and make friends with whomever I want. I don't know when it started, but even though I'm surrounded by many people, I prefer to be alone and don't really like crowds. I don't talk too much, and I prefer to listen and get used to following what my parents said.

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"Leon, how can you paint this wall?" Nathalie praised my painting. "I do not know, maybe it's a natural talent," I said mockingly while continuing to paint

objects in front of me. 'David' that statue has quite intricate details. Slowly but surely the scratch that I gave in my sketchbook, managed to resemble the object of Michaelangelo's artworks. While waiting for Mr. Wriston to provide any comment on my painting, I put down my pencil and watched Nathalie, who was so enthusiastic and excited about painting.

"Nath, why do you paint?" I asked her. "What a silly question it was," Nathalie answered my question and laughing. "I'm serious Nat!" I spoke. "Hmmm, because every time I paint, I find my happiness there, as if finding my true identity. Painting is the goal of my life." With a lovely smile, this time she seriously answered me. "And How about you? Why do you paint?" Asked Nathalie. What kind of silly question, it's like I get a taste of my own medicine? I do not know how to answer so I just said, "Maybe to balance my brainpower," Nathalie looked at me and slowly laughed at what I did.

"Perfect! You've done such a detailed painting; this painting is so much charming. Good job Leon!" Mr. Wriston commented on my painting positively. "Thank you, Sir, I appreciate it" with a big smile on my lips I thank Mr. Wriston for his compliment. "Anyway, how is your preparation for the painting that you will exhibit in the art gallery next week Leon?" Mr. Wriston asked. "It's almost done sir, don't worry," I replied. "Yeah, I know exactly that you will make it perfect," Mr. Wriston cheered me up.

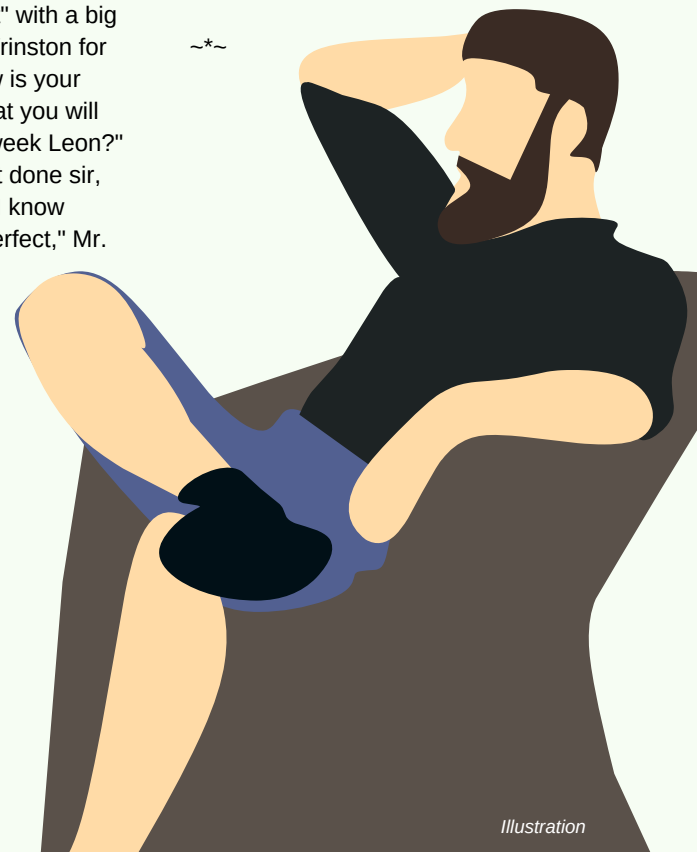
My art show begins. My father's co-workers were so enthusiastic and praised my work. And my mother's do so. Apart from exhibiting works of art, it turns out that this show is also used to show off their dignity by saying "That's my son." This art performance adds to my line of achievements and greatness. I am rich, talented, come from a respected family. There isn't a single person who doesn't want to be like me and surely,

I'm the happiest person, they thought.

The night was getting late, and today the moon was shining in full light. I left my window open as usual, feel the suffocating air around my room. This thought bothers me, makes my head busy, and keeps thinking all the time. It's too difficult to define. What is the real purpose of my life? "HAPPY" oh yeah, I thought that was my purpose. Then what is true happiness? I think I'm happy, I have everything they didn't have. Then why does my head doesn't stop overwhelming? Slowly my cheeks were getting wet, my teardrops start falling. I'm getting more confused "I am not sad, am I? so why am I crying?"

I turned and looked at myself in the large mirror that was right beside me. My heart hurts seeing that reflection in the mirror. The young man who looked great in front of the others was unable to define his happiness even he does not know how to define the feelings that he is currently feeling. Tonight, it hits me, that what I feel right now is a feeling that other people said 'Hollow'. Treasure, fame, and lots of abilities cannot color and define what happiness is.

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Illustration

I'm getting older, my parents are getting old. This time they asked me to get married. It is very normal, as parents when they see their children are quite mature and established. For the first time, I didn't want to obey my parents. They could not accept my refusal and they were very angry. Likewise, I feel that I have the right to do so. Then I decided to leave the house and leave everything. Now I am alone and feel free. I think this time I can find the meaning of happiness and free myself from the emptiness.

I live on my own terms. I did not carry the money or property of my parents when I left them. But I still have my own money that I've got from working and selling my painting. With that money, I go as far as my feet can go. From country to country, city to city, I looked for the empty antidote I felt. Explore and observe various kinds of life, mingling with other people. Until one day I ran out of money, with the remaining savings I had I bought canvases and other painting equipment. I thought my paintings could sell as easily as before, but it turns out that there are very few painting enthusiasts in this city. As a result, I posted the painting myself in a small apartment which I rented for a year.

The days keep changing, I really broke now. I tried to apply for jobs, but I never got it. I was pensive beside the river with the water so calm. Perceiving every single thing that I've done, looking for where the problem lies. My head is busy looking for answers after living alone, feeling free to do all the things I want, it turns out I'm still unable to define happiness. Even now that I know, having nothing will make it harder and harder to find answers to my questions.

I took a deep breath. Suddenly a small child ran and fell not far from where I was sitting. I approached the child immediately, helped, and reached out my hand with a warm smile. "Hey little girl, are you hurt?" I asked. The little girl didn't answer, just shook her head and took my hand uncertainly. "What is your name?" I asked again. "Alica," she answered as necessary. Apparently, the little girl was a little afraid of me, but I tried to make her feel comfortable talking to me.

"hmm, Alica have you ever heard the story of a greedy rabbit and an owl?" I'm trying to cheer up Alica. Alica shook her head. I smiled and started telling the story

of the greedy rabbit and owl to Alica who was eager to hear me. Suddenly without realizing my tears fell, suddenly Alica, who had been watching me, wiped my wet cheeks. "Why are you crying? Isn't it that in the end rabbits are not greedy anymore and live happily?" Alica asked. I was silent and flashed a memory that I had long forgotten. That fairy tale, My Mom always read it to me before bed when I was a kid. I miss her.

A few minutes later, my phone vibrated. "Leon, your mother is waiting for you. Come before you regret it! "My father called me. Hearing his weak voice, messed up my mind. I felt limp at once imagining bad things happened. Finally, I decided to stop my ego. I hurried home.

The next day, I arrived at the house where I was born and raised. Feeling anxious, I stopped for a moment and realized how comfortable this house was. Spacious building surrounded by gardens, flowers, and fishpond with clear water. Why am I only seeing this whenever since I grew up it hasn't been like this, I thought. "Leon!" my mom's voice called me from a distance. Suddenly I was confused and re-digest my father's statement on the phone yesterday.

"How are you mom?" I asked uncertainly. "I almost died missing you son, finally you come home," my mother replied and hug me so tight. I saw my father was tidying

a tree trunk in the corner of the garden when our eyes met, he immediately avoided and hid. I thought hard and unconsciously laughed. Mother who saw me laugh immediately let go of her embrace and hit me gently "Hey, I almost died missing you, and you laughed instead?" She said. I immediately hugged her, once again I realized how warm and comfortable my mother's hug was that she had always given me.

I'm back home now; One by one good memory keeps popping up in my head. Father with his cold attitude that I never realized always managed to break the atmosphere of this house. Mother, who seemed more concerned with other things than me, without realizing it became the number one person who hugged me when I fell. Those who I think are trying everything for their pride, without realizing the pride they have tried to ensure my life until now.

"Did you hit your head when you left this house son?" Father's question broke my reverie. "Sorry and thanks dad, if only you didn't make a joke with a terrible statement at that time maybe I would just end up." "Oh never mind, it's only natural that the boy would be a rebel then leaves the house I am worried if you never confronted even once in all your life, isn't it true my lovely wife?" "Come on, let's eat, dad's favorite peanut butter toast is nowhere!" mom said.

After some time, we sat together at the dining table. "Leon, do you know Mr. Andrew's daughter? I just realize that she is beautiful and perfect to be your future wife, you have to meet her tomorrow" Nothing has changed from mom and dad, they still force me to find any girl to be my life partner. "Oh, come on..." I said while enjoying the toast we laughed together.

The night was getting late, and today, again the moon was shining at its fullest. I left my window open as usual, feeling the cold air. I turned and looked at myself in the large mirror that was right beside me. I saw the reflection smile, finally, he realized that happiness could not be defined, but felt. The man in the mirror forgot to involve the heart in his life. All this time he was busy looking for answers with logic in his head. Whereas what he was looking for was right in front of him. He forgets that sometimes feeling empty is natural because empty is one of the things that comes to color his life.

