

THE HOLE IN THE WALL

By

Josh Hamelin

EXT. TOWN OUTSKIRTS - SUNRISE

Stillness.

Nothing but a light wind rustling tall grass next to a lonely road. Definitely not the interstate - very much "off-the-beaten-track."

The sun begins to rise, giving new life to this place. We follow the light as it encompasses the area, finally hitting a quaint town sign: "Welcome to Serenity, Where Time Stands Still".

EXT. TOWN OF SERENITY - STREETS - MORNING

Street after street of old 80s houses. Well-maintained but still well on there way to antiquity. Everything here is truly from another time, from tire swings, to white picket fences, to freshly-mowed lawns.

EXT. BEN'S HOME - CONTINUING

It's still early to be out-and-about - except for TWO SMALL FEET, which quietly scamper out of the house and towards the BACKYARD.

A beautiful garden is the highlight: green beans, carrots and a tall corn field. The same BOY - gripping an indiscernible object - pushes his through the corn field to the

BACK END OF THE GARDEN.

This is a secret place. A child's sanctuary. A dirty 'welcome' mat is strategically placed in front of a six-foot-tall brick wall.

It's a perfectly-indestructible wall - except for one, tiny flaw: There's a hole at eye-level, just big enough to see through.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL

An eyeball peers through the hole. And as we move back, we see what the boy sees: A vast, endless field that stretches on for eternity.

Pure freedom.

AT THE BACK END OF THE GARDEN

The boy pulls away from the wall, and his kind, innocent face is finally visible. His name is BEN (5) - wielder of a wild imagination.

He takes the Ken doll he's been carrying and makes it scale the wall.

BEN

Now you.

The doll gets its turn to peer through the hole.

SUPER: THE HOLE IN THE WALL

INT. KATHERINE'S ROOM - CONTINUING

The typically wild, rambunctious KATHERINE "KIKI" (3) is currently dormant - sound asleep. But she awakens, and heads for her doll collection, neatly displayed on her dresser.

But there's an obvious gap - *something's missing*. Katherine takes a deep breath, and then -

KIKI

Moooooooooooooooooooo!

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUING

Ben whips his head around at the sound. He knows it's game over, and rushes out of the garden.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUING

Ben's mother, ELIZABETH (early 30s), cooks breakfast. She looks worn, agitated. She rolls her eyes at Kiki's wailing.

ELIZABETH

Kiki - stop that!

KIKI (O.S.)

He did it again!

Elizabeth stops cooking and MUTTERS under her breath:

KIKI

Fuck's sake...

She moves towards the bedrooms, but runs into her husband, JOHN (30s - gruff, stern) on the way. She tries to fix his

tie but he swats her hand away, having none of it.

ELIZABETH

Fine. Look like a slob.

Nothing but a grunt from John - emotionally detached as he searches for his keys.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Kiki, come out of there please!

Kiki stampedes out of the room and Elizabeth barely manages to contain her. She guides Kiki towards the dining table.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Relax. You'll get it back.

Just then, the side door SLAMS shut, and Elizabeth, John and Kiki freeze. A timid Ben stands in the threshold, opposite a cold tableaux.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Great, and now a bath...

Life resumes and everyone but Ben sets into motion.

Soon after, Ben takes his usual seat, and food is placed before him. Ben looks up lovingly at Elizabeth, who doesn't notice.

EXT. BEN'S HOME - MORNING

Fresh-faced and clothed, Ben stands next to Kiki on the sidewalk. A backpack is slung over Ben's shoulder.

KIKI

Those are my dolls. *Mine*.

Ben says nothing, much to Kiki's dismay.

A light wind picks up and rustles the tree branches above. Ben watches - BECOMES MESMERIZED by the way the sunlight shimmers through the leaves.

Just then, a school bus pulls up.

BUS

And takes a solitary seat. As the bus pulls away, Kiki can be seen waving, Ben's secret admirer despite it all.

As the bus continues on, Ben's gaze never leaves the passing scenery. He pops the window open and closes his eyes as he lets the breeze wash over him.

He smiles at the serene sensation. But the moment is cut short by the STUDENT (8) behind him, who slams the door shut.

STUDENT

Christ, kid... freezing my nuts off here.

Ben retreats into himself.

INT. KINDERGARTEN ROOM - DAY

An overly-decorated classroom, with posters, charts and student illustrations. Nearly a dozen small annexes of four desks are spaced throughout the room.

Ben sits at his annex with other STUDENTS. While the kids CHAT, Ben concentrates on his drawing (still to be seen).

The teacher - MS. FARROW (40s, conventional, unimaginative) - CLAPS her hands three times.

MS. FARROW

Alright, children - that's three claps. You know what that means. Time to settle down and put away all distractions.

She moves to an old fashioned projector (that still uses actual film!).

MS. FARROW (CONT'D)

Now we're going to watch a little film.

Ms. Farrow loads the film reel.

MS. FARROW (CONT'D)

Who would like to turn off the lights.

A million little hands dart into the air, hoping to catch Ms. Farrow's eye.

MS. FARROW (CONT'D)

Bobby, would you do us the honor?

Dissatisfied GROANS from everyone but Bobby, who hits the lights.

MS. FARROW (CONT'D)

Now, now - everyone has to take turns.
And that's exactly what we're going to
learn about today.

Ms. Farrow starts the film. Puppets preaching the value of sharing - the kind of "informational" video that turns our children into idiots.

Ben's bedazzled - but not by the video. The film projector catches his eyes: the flickering of light, the way the beam catches endless speckles of dust.

It's like magic.

Ben looks out the window at the playground, teasing him with promises of adventure.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

A clock is mounted to the outside of the school. TIME PASSES IN A DISSOLVE and students now tear through the playground during recess, swinging, sliding and climbing.

Ben stands by himself in a sandy area, He tosses handfuls of sand into the air, but can't quite recreate the film projector effect.

Ben turns to the swing-set. There's an empty swing calling his name. Ben snatches it up and swings. A similarly-euphoric moment for Ben, who enjoys the simple sensation on an entirely different level than the rest of his peers.

As Ben continues to swing he notices a fellow classmate - JACOB - standing not far off, watching him.

INT. KINDERGARTEN ROOM - DAY

Ms. Farrow and the rest of the class sits in a circle on a special carpeted area of the room. BREE, next to Ben, is giving a report of recess activities.

BREE

And then me and Kaitlyn went down the
slide five times each. *And we took
turns!*

MS. FARROW

Very good, Bree!

Bree sits.

MS. FARROW (CONT'D)
Okay Ben, you're turn.

Ben stands. He opens his mouth to speak, but with the spotlight on him, he comes up with nothing.

MS. FARROW (CONT'D)
Ben?

He tries again. Nothing but silence.

MS. FARROW (CONT'D)
If you're not going to share with us
Ben, I'm afraid you're not going to be
allowed to participate in 'free time.'

But even this threat isn't enough to stir Ben. He blushes, dropping his gaze.

LATER.

The children play, some colouring/painting, others bringing action figures to life. From the sidelines, Ben sits alone, watching with envy.

His gaze is locked on a mesh tube, a long tunnel-like toy that children crawl through. Ben's desires get the better of him, and he moves from his exile towards the tunnel.

But just as he pokes his head inside, he's yanked out by Ms. Farrow.

MS. FARROW
No sir. Back to your seat, Ben.

Ben begrudgingly takes a seat. He fights back tears, bottom lip trembling.

INT. BEN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Elizabeth sits by the window, rocking gently. She looks out longingly, trapped behind the glass. A few tears escape and streak her cheeks.

The bus pulls up outside the house and this startles Elizabeth back into consciousness. She wipes her tears and straightens up, just as Ben rushes inside.

Elizabeth stands to greet him, but before she can say a word, Ben latches himself to her, arms wrapped around her legs.

ELIZABETH

You too, huh?

A few SNIFFLES from Ben. He finally looks up at Elizabeth with big, watery eyes. Elizabeth picks Ben up and plants a kiss on his cheek.

Ben stops crying and wipes away his tears.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It's okay, love.

She pulls Ben in close, needing him as much as he needs her.

Just then, John enters, in an even worse mood. He kicks off his boots, letting them fly off wherever, and shrugs his bag of. It THUDS to the floor.

Elizabeth rolls her eyes and puts Ben down. She moves to the KITCHEN.

ELIZABETH

Oh. Didn't hear you come in.

JOHN

(muttering)

Fuck off...

ELIZABETH

'Scuse me?

John ignores her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I guess I'll get dinner started.

JOHN

No, let's go out.

ELIZABETH

Where?

JOHN

Anywhere. I'd rather get salmonella than have one more of your goddamn casseroles.

ELIZABETH

Thought you liked it raw and tasteless.

Elizabeth quickly turns on her heel and disappears into the bedroom before John can get another word in.

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Suddenly something - *someone* - catches Ben's eye, and he stops. It's a fellow classmate - JACOB - And he's staring right at Ben.

For a moment the two boys gaze at each other, curious. Then, Jacob takes off and Ben charges after him, following Jacob into a

PLAY HUT.

A small wooden house with no