

Tom Woods

Mona Vale Public School

THE WILD

Eliot's foggy mind slowly cleared, memories flashed past him, but he couldn't catch on.

Where was he, what was going on, how did he get here? He stepped outside through the rusty side door of the building.

The air was still outside. It chilled him. It seemed unnatural, nothing was moving and it was freezing cold. What was wrong? Eliot stumbled around, looking for someone, anyone to help him. The first signs that life had once existed here, were chewed up bits of rubbish on the dusty sidewalks. As he walked, his mind slowly cleared, he looked back at the old building that he had just exited and saw there was a sign on the top of the building saying "Main Street Cryogenics", now he remembered.

Eliot's father had been the head of a cryogenics research project. After making an important discovery about keeping the body stable during a long term freeze, his father had volunteered the whole family to be frozen for one hundred years. "Wait" thought Eliot, "my whole family was frozen, but where are they?" Eliot suddenly looked around, realising he was now too far from the cryogenics lab to head back.

Huge creeper vines clung to crumbling buildings, all of them made from the same dull grey stone. Skyscrapers higher than any that he had ever seen, stood leaning at impossible angles. This place was wild, unlike anything that Eliot had ever seen, he had to get out of here.

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Eliot slowly stepped into one of the smaller houses, looking around, he saw a small sink in the corner. He realised how thirsty he was, after all, he hadn't drunk anything for more than one hundred years. He turned the handle of the tap, it was extremely smooth and moved easily. He was surprised when a strong flow of cold water spilled out of the tap. He cupped his hands and greedily drank as much as he could swallow.

Eliot needed to find people, he headed back onto the deserted street to see what he could learn about why there were no people. As he stepped out of the door, he felt a revolting crunch under his foot. He looked down and jumped back, disgusted at the sight before him, hundreds of large black cockroaches scuttled around in ripples on the floor. At least now he knew that he was not alone in this world. Huge weeds spread over the ground, sprouting from every nook and cranny, they enveloped the buildings, covering them with nets, slowly pulling them apart. Eliot emerged into what was once the town square, an enormous fountain sat dry and crumbling in the centre of what was once a magnificent courtyard. Darkness slowly began closing in and Eliot saw ominous shadows spreading across the walls. He glimpsed the cryogenics building in the distance and ran down the deserted laneways as fast as he could, away from the eerie night.

Eliot stumbled into the room that contained his cryogenics pod, "I wonder where my parents' pods are?" he thought. He decided to search the room next to his, where they originally slept. He headed through the door into his parents' room, Eliot was shocked to find carnage everywhere, the pods were smashed and wires hung out of sockets

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everywhere. There were no signs of Eliot's parents. He wept silently as he realised that his parents could no longer be alive. He returned to the room where his pod was and started to search for his little sister's one. There was no sign of her anywhere. Distraught, cold and confused, Eliot curled up into his own pod and sunk into a fitful sleep.

He woke late the next morning and as he opened his eyes, he caught a glimpse of a face, peeking out from behind a pile of rubble. "Argh" bellowed Eliot, jumping out of his pod, a young boy peered at him, watching him closely. "Hello" whispered Eliot in a hopeful voice, "who are you, what are you doing here?" responded the stranger aggressively. "My name is Eliot" answered Eliot, "I'm Adam, and we should really get out of here. You know that we're not allowed up here in The Wild, it's contaminated." "What do you mean by 'up here'?" asked Eliot. "Here, on the surface, it's called The Wild! How don't you know that? It's been contaminated since the nuclear explosion ten years ago. Come with me, you can explain when we get safely down below."

Adam led Eliot to a sewerage grate at the bottom of the fountain. They climbed down an old, rusty ladder and ended up in a brightly lit passageway. Leading Eliot through this passage, Adam began to question him. "How old are you?" "I'm twelve" replied Eliot. "I'm thirteen" said Adam. They arrived in a huge, bustling hall, filled with different shops and stalls and lots of people busily chattering. "This is our marketplace" said Adam "and my family's quarters are just down this passageway". They wandered down the passageway, and came to a doorway that Adam entered. "This is my home" he said, entering a large

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round lounge room. "I live here with my parents, they're not my real parents, my real parents were killed in the nuclear disaster, when I was three. Most of the people in our country were killed in the explosion and my parents adopted me in the months after I was evacuated underground. I don't really remember much of my life at that time, but I love my new parents and I'm just glad that I survived."

"Where did you come from and what were you doing living up there in The Wild?" asked Adam. "Well," began Eliot "you probably won't believe this but trust me, it's all true. In the year 2028 my father discovered something important in the field of cryogenic freezing, he wanted to test it out and volunteered our whole family to take part. We were all frozen for one hundred years in high tech pods, but because of this 'nuclear disaster' my parents' pods were completely destroyed, I found the ruins of their pods last night in the other room."

"But where have you been for the past ten years, since the disaster, there hasn't been any power to keep your pod alive?" "The pods had a ten year life support system on them, so I guess I have been kept alive by that. I woke from my pod yesterday, but I still don't know what became of my little sister's pod, I couldn't find it in the room with mine." Eliot replied "Wow" breathed Adam "so you came from the past in a cryogenic pod and you were completely alone in The Wild for a day and a half." "Yeah, that's pretty much it" mumbled Eliot.

Adam continued to stare curiously at Eliot, "you know that it's supposedly impossible for a person to survive for longer than half an hour in The Wild without any protection? I saw you

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near the courtyard yesterday, but I had to go back underground because I was afraid of being contaminated. When I came to find you today, I was frightened that I might have stayed outside for too long. We should tell the authorities that it is now possible to survive in The Wild for longer than we thought.” “Good idea” said Eliot “let’s go and tell the leaders now.” “Just wait one second” said Adam, “I need to ask you a very strange question. Can you tell me about your sister?” “Why?” asked Eliot. Adam answered slowly “my adopted parents knew my real parents and grandparents very well. They always tell me the story of my grandmother. She was supposed to be involved in an important cryogenics experiment and the pod that she was supposed to go into, broke down. She couldn’t be part of the experiment and so she stayed living in her time and was adopted by her aunt and uncle. Her name was Molly McDonald and her story sounds very similar to yours.” Eliot stared at Adam, completely mystified “Molly McDonald is my sister! Now I know why I couldn’t find her pod in the room with me, she wasn’t ever frozen. This means that she was alive and lived a wonderful life!” “Wait,” said Adam thinking hard, “if my grandma was your sister, then you would be my great uncle!” The two boys embraced each other, realising that they were close relatives from a completely different time. They went and found the leaders of the community and told them Eliot’s story and how it was now safe to live above the surface, in The Wild. Adam and Eliot’s family, along with the rest of their community, gradually moved back to the surface and slowly but surely began a new life. What used to be called The Wild was now a fertile, thriving community and Eliot was adopted by Adam’s family and the two lived happily as brothers.