

## **Nick and Nate**

It had been ten years since he had last seen him, but he still missed him. He sat in his office chair, unable to concentrate on work. How would he do it? How do you tell someone that you have not seen for ten years that you would like to rekindle your friendship, that you are still not over him? How would he even reach him? He balled his hands into fists. Should he just leave it be finally give up and accept that he was gone, that he would never see him again? He had somehow made it through these past years without him, even though it had made him turn into a workaholic, never getting work out of his head, never leaving the office, never coming home to his wife. But he had made it.

"But then again", he thought, "he was the best friend I could have ever asked for." They were Nick and Nate, after all. They grew up together, living under the same roof, sleeping in the same bed, did everything together. He could not even remember how he met Nick, he had just always been there, helping him through all the things in his life that Nate was sure he would not be able to go through. But knowing he was not alone, that he had someone by his side, he felt he was able to do anything and everything. Nick was a troublemaker, always up to some mischief, always plotting something, while Nate was a very shy, quiet child. He did not know why Nick even befriended him, after all he was the type of boy that would usually be very popular, but at school everybody seemed to look through him, as if he was invisible. Nate wished it would have been the same for him, but the school bullies found him quickly, just a day after he set foot into the new school. Nick could never really help him stand up to them, but would always cheer him up on their way home. Sometimes when they reached home, his mother was waiting for them outside. The boys already knew what that meant.

They would have to deal with the consequences of their little pranks now, another scolding by mom. It was not the first time his mother had to rebuke them. Nick made sure that something new broke in the house almost every day or persuaded Nate to scare the neighbor's children with him. But for some reason, it was always Nate who got into trouble for it. Nate did not mind it, though, because friends help each other out.

He should call him. He reached for the phone book, picked up his cell phone, his hands shaking a little. "Nick... Nick...", he faltered. He did not remember his last name. Years of friendship and yet it was almost as if he did not know him that well. If he was being honest, he could not even really remember his face. But that did not change his feelings about their friendship. He believed it was the best thing that had ever happened to him. And losing him the worst. After they lost sight of each other, he threw himself into his work. Scaring the neighbor children, breaking something in the house in a wild brawl was no longer possible. It didn't fit into his daily routine because it was always the same: getting up, getting ready for work, work, lunch, some more work, driving home, work from home, dinner, going to sleep. Something that made no profit was pointless in his eyes and it was impossible to just break his schedule and go do something else. 'Impossible'. A word he would never have used when he was little. Nick always said that 'Its just hard. It's not impossible' with a wide smile on his face. He always motivated him, distracted him, kept him going.

His world was gray, it had been for 10 years, even though it used to be bursting with color. Still, he did not feel sorry for himself, he had no time for that. There was no way to reach him now, he did not

know his phone number. Maybe it was better that way. He was sure that Nick would get him to do less work and get out of the house more, do stupid things with him, just like he did back then. That would turn his schedule upside down. He was grown up now. He could not afford to be distracted. Work was more important than fun now. Fun did not pay bills. He put his cell phone down again and closed the phone book. Perhaps they would meet again one day, but not today. Nate went back to work to forget his old friend as soon as possible.

What did not occur to him was that he could have seen him anytime if he really wanted to. After all, Nick was just an invention of his imagination, but it looked like both had left him.