



Inglorious Recollections of a ‘Bruncler’

Human existence: a diversity of being, cooked up in a melting pot of nature and nurture, delivers a unique result. A remarkable blueprint that cannot - and will not - be duplicated. From our first tottering steps to those last dodderly stumbles, we carve a track that defines our actuality on this blue orb.

How does one define his, or her life? Is it through learning achieved or places visited? Could it be a family formed, or work accomplished? Does our heritage say who we are, or is it more to do with friends we keep, the faith we maintain, the place we live in, or politics we prefer? All these assorted parts go to make one whole being, for better or worse, richer or poorer. (“So help me God”, some might add, if they have cause to resort to belief in such universal, long held myths).

We are a product of nature and in that respect a significant portion of life is already defined and fixed, even before that glorious moment when we poke through the pubic hairs to sniff the air around. Looking on from the outer; from the aspect of that environment which greets us when we do finally make our entry onto life’s stage, we find an entirely different perspective. For this new world which surrounds us, is also a very fluid thing, and the choices we make will come to define our being, perhaps even more than those genes inherited from our forebears.

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We all have a tale to tell. That's what life is all about, isn't it? Whether a 'high-flyer', or living in abject poverty, it is a life: yours or mine; his or hers. Immersed in each life - underpinning every existence - there is a story to be told, which has relevance to the sphere of its world. In those domains beyond the person whose life is the focus of attention, some stories are perhaps less engaging than others. But this depends to an extent on how the story is presented; how the important elements of that being are selected and joined to form a complete portrait. A life story is a painting of countless brushstrokes: a Mona Lisa of our being; a Da Vinci code which only the painter can decipher with certainty.

For every individual, his or her own personal tale is the most enthralling story of all: more important than any president, or footballer, or film star. This is because the being in the spotlight has lived every minute, every second, of their own story: the highs, the lows, and the myriad of in-betweens. No other person's account of life can match our own narrative, but for it to be fascinating to others - even enriching - depends on how the tale is painted; how it is developed and displayed to the world beyond.

This story celebrates one such journey, starting from the cradle – or indeed, before the cradle to be more precise - with some remarkable events along the way. This life in focus – this **bruncle** - did not gain the fame of a high-flying politician, or prize-winning entertainer; neither did it find infamy through incredible wrongdoing, but it has enjoyed a long and winding road, across the terrain of more than seven decades.

At the time of committing narrative to print, our being in the spotlight has reached the age of aching bones and sore feet: things it would not wish on anyone (but which it imagines almost everyone who passes the muster of middle age, has to endure). This is the phase of one's existence where accumulated knowledge - often but not always - enables clearer insight and better understanding. Then, in retrospect, the highlights and lowlights can be seen in the setting of a greater whole, encompassing past, present, and future, and comprehending meaning through accrued involvement. Like fish observed in

a glass bowl, with hindsight and the wisdom of experience, we can see more from outside looking in, than the unsure fish in its limited world, sees from inside looking out.

But the fact is that this one life can only inhabit a miniscule slice of the available whole, and from that tiny portion carves out its own story. What if this life had been born in another place, had inherited an alternative background or had travelled to different domains? Then its story would have been unrecognizable from the one which is told here. Through time and space, we each *whittle our own niche*: the embodiment and statement of our personal being.

Whittling our niche

*Imagine what one doesn't see,
Or hear, or feel, or experience,
Through any one life
On this blue-green globe.
The choice we have is limitless,
The path we choose to take,
Governed by a potent mix
Of genes and circumstantial fate.*

*Reality comes individually:
A short, sweet glimpse, a minute amount,
From oceans of people
And deserts of place.
Within some overall time-set frame
We carve and whittle our niche,
Discarding the remaining sequoia tree
For the other seven billion to reach.*

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Thus to 'Bruncler' ...

Some might ask, "So *what is this peculiar word 'bruncler'?*" And the response would be that this unusual, perhaps even odd word, is chosen for the fact that it defines and underscores the story told, more than any other word in existence.

As you read on, you will discover that the reality assumed by the central character at the start, is quite different to the individual who emerges a quarter of a century later; the earlier form had been misled by loved ones over the length and breadth of the intervening twenty-five years.

Whether those cherished family members who were part of the fabrication, felt it was a good thing to do for the individual in focus, or alternatively for his mother, remains a mystery. Any true reasoning behind their action, was never divulged, or even admitted.

One major result which sprang from our hoodwinked central character, named *George*, knowing the truth, was that brothers and sisters became uncles and aunts, while at the same time nephews and nieces became cousins. In addition, George also assumed the title of oldest in a younger generation, rather than his earlier status of youngest in a more outdated clan: a reformed state of being which he much preferred.

But even more critical than those sweeping changes to family relationships, one nephew in particular, suddenly became elevated to assume the station of George's half-brother. In so doing, *John* - the half-brother in question, who had a way with words – perhaps in something of a frivolous mood, returned the compliment by coining the descriptor for their newfound bond. Thus, the term '**bruncle**' came into being. A word that was able to be adopted from either end, to underline in most simple form their status, and combine their new kinship, with friendship and love ... to be used from that day forth.

And so, the story begins

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