

## Retelling of 'Daedalus and Icarus'

Finally, what was to be known as 'Project COE.09' was complete. I went to see Ivan full of joy, and with almighty pep in my step.

"I'm finished! I must say a massive thank you for the hospitality, care and luxury that we have received during my stay. I will start packing mine and Benjamin's bags. We will leave when you are ready to fly us back to our village. We can discuss all the financial details on the route back, and once again, thank you!" and I swiftly turned around to leave.

"Halt!" Ivan commanded, stopping me in my tracks, "do you acknowledge the mass of capability belonging to what you have created?" Ivan asked rhetorically. "I understand. You were given a task and you delivered, but don't you think that there is a sense of almost ..." he hesitated, "... how do I put this? Wasted potential."

"The cloning machine possesses great power. Enough to create an unbeatable army," Ivan continued.

Slowly, I processed his words in my head. My ignorant self hadn't deciphered that Ivan's true intentions were far from what he made them out to be.

"You are making yourself unclear! The objective was to develop the capability of human cloning to eradicate diseases from the world. Now, you're sounding like you wish to become a dictator!" I declared – frustrated.

"I'm just saying, I think we should explore further options. To be honest, with an army of millions we could easily fend off opposing threats and take over the world." At this point Ivan lit a cigar.

"Join me," Ivan smiled pleadingly – flashing his set of crooked teeth.

"No!" I spat the word out at him, "We are leaving; I don't wish to join you!"

Ivan blew smoke out of his mouth, that enveloped my face, making me cough.

"I wasn't asking." Ivan said coldly. My heart dropped. In a split second his demeanour had flipped. He clicked his fingers to get the attention of his bodyguards and ordered them to escort me back to my room.

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Many months had passed since that fateful day - the day our freedom was snatched away from us. At first, I couldn't see the point in living. An overwhelming sense of imprisonment was suffocating me and the guilt of depriving Benjamin of his home was too hard to bear. This reflected greatly on him. I had to change. For my son.

I devised a plan... As the walls and gates of the palace were impenetrable, escaping on foot wasn't an option. Therefore, I designed unique high-tech wings that would propel us through the air, over the towering walls and to safety. We will finally be able to abscond from this Soviet ruler - Ivan - the same piece of tyranny who had lied to me, betrayed me, oppressed me and imprisoned us. I spent my days secretly collecting resources to carry out our plan whilst Benjamin spent his in the observatory gazing at the sun, moon and stars. I suppose it was his way of coping and giving him some sort of comfort.

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Not a night went by where I haven't dreamt about home. I barely remembered our village – I could recall the scent from the local bakery that wafted through the air, and the harmonic voices of the church choir resonating through the lush gardens.

Then, there was the part that I remembered vividly; Ivan's uneven smile, as he introduced the offer that he claimed to be 'life changing', the rhythmic sound of the soldiers' march, the wind whipping my face as the deafening noise of the silver helicopter blades pierced my ears when we took off and headed to the MotherLand. And the most frightening sight – the border. It snaked along a vast stretch of greenery with barbed wire separating good from evil. I remembered the helicopter gracefully came to a halt as it landed inside the tall walls of a magnificently elegant white marble palace that rose up high to tickle the sky. Benjamin and I were led to our quarters, which didn't lack any of the remarkable properties belonging to the palace. We couldn't turn a corner without being greeted by valuable artefacts, magnificent paintings or bottles of vintage wine. Later that evening, we were invited to a formal dinner as Ivan was keen to introduce himself. Sharing this moment with my beloved son, living in a luxury penthouse with everything necessary and more, and working my dream job made me feel like the happiest man ever. Even to this day, the thought of what could have been makes me tear up.

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Back in my lab I worked and worked, days and nights, until the wings were ready. That night, at the hour of midnight, we prepared on our balcony.

"Benjamin, lad," I said to him, "this will be the one and only chance we have of escaping. I understand that you have a deep interest in astronomy, but please do not venture too high up as the wings will become rigid and freeze due to the altitude we will be flying at."

"Don't worry dad!" Benjamin smiled at me, "I'll follow your lead." I grabbed Benjamin by his jacket and embraced him.

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There was not a better sensation than the wind flowing through my hair, as I was lifted higher and higher into the night sky. Benjamin followed closely behind me.

"You alright there son?" I asked.

"Better than ever!" he shouted back in response.

I glared down at the lakes that looked like puddles, hills that looked like bumps and valleys that looked like cracks. All was peaceful. Suddenly, I heard faint screams of Benjamin. I whipped my head around only to find him so high up in the sky. His wings useless and stationary, he hurtled towards the ground, somersaulting past me. I darted down to get him as he screamed my name. I was now only a hundred or so yards away from him. Fifty, twenty-five, ten, five yards away. I could practically feel him on my fingertips, when my vision went white as I was surrounded by a dense cloud and lost track of Benjamin. Frantically, I changed direction, trying to find a way out of the maze of this fluffy cloud. By the time I finally escaped, Benjamin was gone. I scanned the area, wildly searching for any sign of him. Where is he, where is he?! I cursed my wits. Yes! I found him. My heart lit up with glee, only to be extinguished by the realisation that it was too late. He was spearing down towards the ground, and I knew that I couldn't save him; his death was inevitable. I shuddered as his motionless body bounced back into the air and down again onto the harsh undergrowth.

I buried Benjamin on the same spot he died and wandered off to the horizon. I never returned to my village where I so longed to be.