

THE LONG ROAD UP

Written by

Justin Scott Cole

(850) 565-0584

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

MAX, 31, enters and watches BILLY, 8, watch Sesame Street. He sits down, deep in thought. He walks over to the fridge and stares at Billy's drawings covering the front of it.

He opens it and grabs juice. He then grabs two glasses from the cabinet and walks back to the table and sits down.

MAX

Hey, Slugger, come over here for a minute. I need to talk to you. I have some juice for you, too.

*

Puzzled, Billy turns the volume down and walks to his dad. Max hands a glass of juice to Billy.

MAX (CONT'D)

Where's your mom?

BILLY

In her bedroom. She's not feeling well. What's wrong, Pop?

*

Max walks to the bedroom door and peeks in the doorway. He quietly closes the door and puts his finger to his lips.

*

MAX

I have to go away for a while, tiger. I need you to be the man of the house, for me and your mother.

*

BILLY

I... Where you going?

MAX

Sheriff Williams is coming to take me away. For your protection, I'm being relocated just until some bad people get caught.

BILLY

Pop, can't Sheriff take all of us?

Max shakes his head.

MAX

The bad guys only want me. They don't know about you or Mommy. So I'll be hidden by the sheriff until the bad guys get caught. Just be brave, like you always are.

Billy looks at his shoes then up to his father. He walks over *
and hugs him. They walk to the counter. Billy puts the
glasses in the sink. Max gathers ingredients for pancakes.

BILLY

Pop, don't you worry about us. I
got a plan that will get those bad
guys.

MAX

That's my boy. Now give me the
super duper secret hero handshake.

Billy and Max do a funny secret handshake.

MAX (CONT'D)

Want to help me pack? Then we can
have our favorite pancakes. How
does that sound?

BILLY

Yum!

MAX

But we got to be very quiet and not
wake Mom, okay.

Smiling, Billy hugs Max. They exit.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy and Max enter. Max packs quietly. Billy walks over to
the dresser and picks up a photo of him and his dad at the
ballpark. He stares at it then walks over to his dad.

GLORIA, 30, opens her eyes, turns over and pulls the covers
up over her.

GLORIA

Will you hurry up and pack so I can
get some sleep. It's bad enough
your leaving us, now your making
noise so I can't sleep.

MAX

Sorry.. Honey, I'll be quick.

Max looks down as he grabs his suitcase from under the bed. *

BILLY

Why are the bad guys after you?

MAX

I saw my old boss, Mr. Batts, he was doing something he shouldn't have.

Billy considers this.

BILLY

Pop, if you know who they are, why don't the police just arrest them?

MAX

He left the country. I escaped after they tried to catch me.

*

BILLY

Don't worry pop, I got a plan. But can we be sure that Mr. Batts just wants you and not us?

GLORIA

Yes Max, won't he come after us? Don't you care enough to fight to put us in the witness protection also.

Max looks at Gloria then at Billy.

MAX

He doesn't know about you or Mommy. It's only for a short while.

Gloria turns over in the bed facing away from Max.

BILLY

Don't go.

Max hugs him.

MAX

You'll be fine with Mommy. Be strong for her, alright?

BILLY

Okay, Pop.

Max finishes packing. Billy hands him the picture of them at the ballpark. Max takes the picture, smiles and puts it in the suitcase. He gives Billy the secret handshake.

Max goes over to Gloria's side of the bed and kisses her forehead.

MAX
I'll be back soon love.

Max and Billy exit.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Max and Billy walk to the counter and start making pancakes. Max pours the batter. Billy does the flipping.

Both are silent.

They grab two plates, syrup, peanut butter and utensils and bring them to the table and start to eat.

Max watches Billy.

MAX
Billy, I'm very proud of you. Don't ever stop doing your best.

BILLY
Mama makes me study all the time so I can be smart just like you.

Max looks down at his plate and up to Billy, smiles while trying to hold back the tears.

Billy finishes his pancakes.

MAX
Time for bed, son. Sweet dreams.

BILLY
Pop, yes it's time for bed but not for me. Those baddies will soon regret coming after you. I love you pop.

MAX
I love you too. I'll be back soon. Take care of Mommy.

Max kisses and hugs Billy. Billy exits. Max exits the apartment.

EXT. APARTMENT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Max waits under a street light. He lights a cigarette. A black vehicle rapidly approaches and comes to a screeching halt next to Mike.

Max walks to the car, looks into the window. It rolls down to reveal MR. BATTS, 60, sitting in the backseat.

SHERIFF WILLIAMS, 50, pulls up around the corner in a police cruiser. Max heads to car but the doors to Mr. Batts vehicle swing open and two men grab Max and pull him inside.

The vehicle peels off and Sheriff Williams turns his sirens on and speeds to follow in pursuit.

INT. MR. BATTS' VEHICLE - NIGHT

Max starts to get up from the floor of the backseat, he looks at Mr. Batts sitting in a suit and fedora, smoking a cigar.

MAX

What.. What the hell is going on?

Mr. Batts re-lights his cigar and exhales a puff of smoke toward Max. Max waves his hand to fan it away.

MR. BATTS

You really think we'd let you leave without saying a proper goodbye, Maxie?

MAX

Look, I haven't said anything and I'm not going to say a word.

MR. BATTS

According to my sources, you said plenty. Because of you, I have to relocate and pay out big.

MAX

Look, I'll do anything. Just let me go, please.

Mr. Batts lets out a laugh and shakes his head.

MR. BATTS

You're worth more to me dead now. There's a lot of people that will pay big for your head you know.

MAX

Look, I didn't want to say this, but I got a son and a wife. C'mon, surely you can relate?

MR. BATTS
Do I look like a man that can
relate?

The car speeds up and turns the corner where it drives down
under a bridge near the river.

MR. BATTS (CONT'D)
Time for a swim, Maxie.

MAX
Look, maybe we can make a deal.
You're a businessman, right?

MR. BATTS
Too late, Maxie.

Mr. Batts signals to one of his guys to grab Max.

MOB THUG #1
Get up you, off you go to the
swimming hole.

EXT. MR. BATTS' VEHICLE - NIGHT

As the doors open, several cop cars pull up and surround the
vehicle. COPS jump out, drawing their weapons.

COP #1
Come out with your hands up!

Max turns to Mr. Batts.

MAX
You really think I'd leave without
saying a proper goodbye, Mr. Batts?

Mr. Batts exhales smoke from his cigar.

MR. BATTS
I dunno how you did it Maxie, but
believe me, you're done. You better
watch your back from now on, cause
the day will come when I'll have my
revenge.

MAX
For now you're going away for a
long time. And by the way, I quit!

Max, with his hands raised up, steps away from the car as
cops swarm the vehicle apprehending Mr. Batts and his crew.

Max walks over to Sheriff Williams car and gets inside.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Sheriff starts up and drives Max home. Max looks out the window and sighs.

SHERIFF WILLIAMS

That was a close one, Max. But
thanks to good timing, we were able
to apprehend Batts and his crew.

Max just stares out the window.

MAX

Now you can put me and family in
the witness protection right?

SHERIFF WILLIAMS

Yea, sure thing Max. We'll do
everything to keep you together
with them.

Max continues to stare out the window and smiles.

MAX

Thank you Sir, you don't know how
much they mean to me.

The police cruiser pulls up to Max's apartment building.

SHERIFF WILLIAMS

Alright, get some rest Max. I'll be
over tomorrow to discuss the
details with you and your family.

Max nods, opens the door and exits.

EXT. APARTMENT HOME - NIGHT

Max walks up and stands at the foot of the stairs leading up to the building. Billy peaks through the window as he looks up. Max smiles, and heads up the stairs.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

SHERIFF WILLIAMS

(into radio)

Alright, do it now!

Sheriff Williams drives off down the street.

EXT. APARTMENT HOME - NIGHT

Max starts to open the door to the apartment. As the door opens, the apartment erupts in an explosion. Max gets pushed several feet away against the building next door. Debris falls all around and on top of him.

TO BE CONTINUED.