

Labyrinth

DANI MILLER

FELIX WAS LOST. THAT'S ALL THERE WAS TO IT. He had no idea which way to go and there didn't seem to be anyone within the general vicinity to ask for directions. His mother had asked him this morning if he would be fine getting to school on his own and even asked if he needed directions. It was the first day of his new school and he didn't want to show up to the front door in his mom's minivan. How embarrassing would that be? It was bad enough he was the new kid, but he didn't need to give his classmates any more of a reason to tease him.

It had always been like this: his dad constantly chasing a get rich scheme and dragging his family along. So far Felix and his sister hadn't stayed at a school for more than a year, except the one time where they were there for a year and a half, and even then they left halfway through the semester. Felix's mom always toyed with the idea of homeschooling the two, but they opposed it every step of the way. Besides, Millie liked moving around. She had an active imagination and said that each move was a new adventure, waiting to be discovered. Felix couldn't share in her enthusiasm, but went along with her games just the same.

A car sped past Felix, bringing him back to his current predicament. He thought for sure the school was on Elm Grove Lane, but when he turned down the street, he clearly saw that was not the case. The dingy road was lined with buildings all in a state of disrepair and it felt like some evil presence was looming over him.

"Don't be silly Felix," he chided to himself, "this isn't one of Millie's games." He kept walking down the road, hoping that someone would be in one of the doorways, maybe willing to help him out. Everywhere he looked, he could see signs of a broken neighborhood and one that needed some life brought back into it. Litter surrounded the curbs and the trash cans were overflowing. He could hear people shouting in the distance, but couldn't discern what they

were actually saying. A dog ran past him with a kid hot on its heels. Felix tried to wave the youngster down, but the duo was gone before he could say a word.

Deeper into this labyrinth Felix went, feeling even more lost and aware of how alone he was until he saw a young woman coming out of one of the buildings. She stepped down onto the sidewalk and looked left, and then right, taking little notice of the stranger before proceeding to walk in the opposite direction of him. Felix was so ecstatic to find someone that he forgot where he was and took off after her.

His running must have alerted her to him because before he could say something, she whipped around, brandishing a set of keys like a weapon. Felix reeled back and threw his hands up in defense, not sure how to take this approach. He knew he should say something, but the words wouldn't come out. The girl looked to be about his age and she had a backpack thrown over one of her shoulders. 'I wonder if she's heading to the same school as me,' Felix thought as he cautiously put his hands down.

"Umm, could I possibly ask you for directions? I'm new to town and I don't know where PS 119 is."

The girl looked him over and she must have decided he wasn't a threat, putting her keys back into her pocket. "Sure, PS 119 is over on Elm Glade Boulevard," she said as she started walking away.

'Elm Glade? No wonder I was

lost, I thought Mom had said Elm Grove,' Felix mused before realizing he had no idea where Elm Glade was either. Before he lost sight of his savior, he took off after her, hoping she would lead him in the right direction. She didn't seem too upset or bothered by a stranger walking a few paces behind her, but Felix couldn't stand the awkward silence.

"My name is Felix by the way. Could I get yours?"

"Kenna," was all she provided before walking along in silence again. She didn't seem keen on providing any more information about herself, so the pair walked on, keeping a safe distance from the other. For some reason, Felix was OK with this awkward walk. He didn't know if it was because he was now heading to school or because he was able to get out of the dingy neighborhood unscathed. Either way, he was lucky to have found Kenna when he did and he was grateful for her help.

