

Things Fall into Place



A son and father meeting after years of not seeing each other to show that there's always hope
within relationships.

Student Writers: Lennox and Luke.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Curiosity.....	Page 3
Chapter 2 - Plans.....	Page 4
Chapter 3 - Trouble.....	Page 5
Chapter 4 - Progress.....	Page 6
Chapter 5 - More Relaxed.....	Page 7
Chapter 6 - Home.....	Page 8
Chapter 7 - Nothing Rushed.....	Page 9
Closing Thoughts.....	Page 10

Chapter 1 - Curiosity

The photograph felt thin between Thomas's fingers, the lamentation smudged with fingerprints. The man he had been told was his father was within the image, his arm slung around his mother's shoulders. They looked happy. They were young, they hadn't had him yet, and it was before his father had been sent away to prison. There was a longing in his chest and it pulled him to stand up and walk down the hall to his mother's room.

The sun was setting outside, golden hues peeking through the curtain of his mother's bedroom window. Becky was winding down for the day, letting her hair down and discarding her RN badge to the top of her dresser. She was wearing purple scrubs. He felt no need to knock as the door was wide open, just hesitantly speaking, "Hey, mom, do you think you could tell me about dad again?"

She sighed, exhaustion written within the lines on her face. She didn't even glance at him, mumbling, "We've been over this, Tommy. Just go to bed."

He was disappointed to say the least but accepted defeat, bidding his mother goodnight before retreating to his own room. He just wanted to know his father, really know him. He was always told about what he did for a living— an automotive mechanic. He was always told what he was like— hard-working and family-orientated. He wanted to see for himself, though.

He spent his night on Facebook, looking through all the profiles with the name George York Johnson, looking at the profile pictures and the posts until he finally found the man in the picture with his mother— his father. Thomas followed his father's account and waited for something in response. He was worried that his father didn't want anything to do with him.

Chapter 2 - Plans

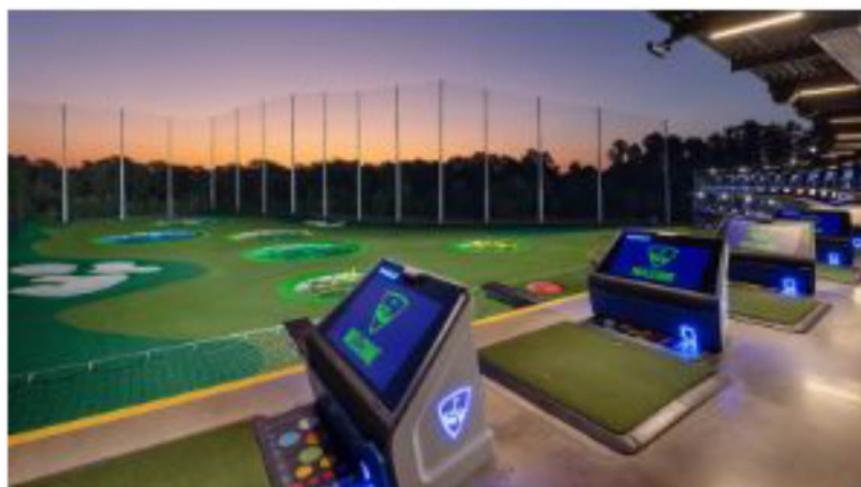
Thomas woke up to two notifications the next day: a new follower, and a message. He sat up in his bed, the sheets and mattress shifting around him as sunlight pooled in through the window. He felt excitement bubbling within his stomach. It was his father.

George had asked to meet up, to make plans with his son. He had recognized the profile picture immediately as he had seen Thomas grow up through images Becky occasionally sent him, like when his golf team won at state, or the usual school pictures.

He asked ice-breaker questions, like if Thomas was enjoying school, if he had many friends, if he was in any clubs, and Thomas answered before asking George where he worked, what area of the city he lived, and how he was doing. They participated in small talk before the question weighed into the conversation. Did Thomas want to meet his father?

It was half an hour before Thomas responded. And for that half hour George couldn't focus on the engine he was repairing for a customer's truck, anxious that his son didn't actually want to meet. That worry was proven to be irrational as Thomas sent a text apologizing for not responding sooner, he had been in class, and asking where George would like to meet.

The destination was determined to be Top Golf as it sat between their homes.



Chapter 3 - Trouble

They decided to meet on a Saturday, both of them driving to meet in the middle. Thomas faced trouble, though, as his car started pulling to the right side of the road. He was starting to lose control, his steering veering off, so he pulled over on the highway. And he called his father who almost immediately picked up.

"Hey, I'm on the side of the road with a flat tire."

George didn't even think for a minute, the words falling from his mouth, "What street? I'll come help."

So Thomas glanced around the highway, sharing the name of it as the sun rose in the sky a bit higher as it was noon. And George arrived, a knight in a t-shirt and shorts who drove a Chevy. He got out, parked behind Thomas on the shoulder, and asked what tire it was.

And so George helped his son change the damaged tire, talking him through it, using the opportunity as a learning curve. Thomas nodded along and did as his father said. It was as if they had known each other all along, working in perfect harmony. And Thomas looked even more like George in person.

Eventually, when everything got situated, George got back into his vehicle, telling Thomas to just follow behind him. They were back on track and bonded.



Chapter 4 - Progress

Thomas and George got settled into a booth at Top Golf, an air conditioner flowing down onto them, the sun still high in the sky. One of the servers who had a nose ring came around and asked if they wanted anything to drink. George looked to Thomas, giving him full permission to answer for himself, something his mother never did. So he got a Pepsi alongside George and the game began.

Thomas stood up to take the first swing. He held the club too tight and the ball barely rolled off the mat. George walked over and moved his feet a little. Thomas tried again and the ball flew straighter this time. They went back and forth hitting balls and talking between turns. It was light conversation, nothing too serious, but every small moment felt like progress.

They stayed there for a few hours. Sometimes they sat in the booth and watched the range in silence. Sometimes they joked about their bad shots. When it was time to leave they walked out together and Thomas felt like the day had gone better than he expected. He drove home thinking about how different it felt to finally spend time with his father.



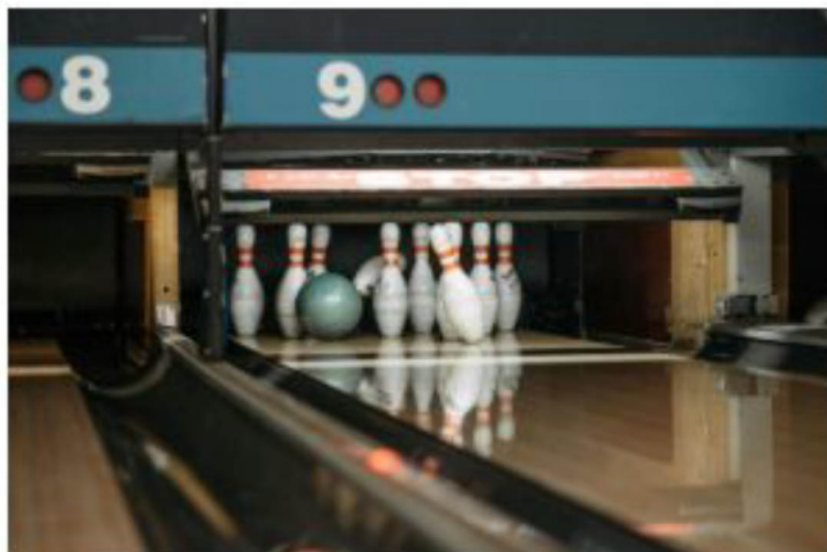
Chapter 5 - More Relaxed

The next time they met was after school at a bowling alley across town. Thomas walked in with his backpack still on his shoulder and found George near the shoe counter. The lights were bright and the music was loud. Thomas took off his shoes and put on the rental pair while George typed their names into the scoreboard.

Thomas picked up a ball and stepped onto the lane. He swung too fast and the ball slammed into the gutter. George laughed quietly and grabbed his own ball. He knocked down eight pins on his first turn. Thomas felt competitive right away and focused harder on his next roll.

They played a full game, then another one just for fun. Sometimes they talked. Sometimes they watched people on the lanes beside them. After bowling they ordered fries and sat at a small round table eating out of the same basket. The food was greasy but good.

Thomas felt more relaxed around George today. The alley felt like a place where nothing had to be serious. When they left he felt like they were finally getting used to being around each other.



A few days later Thomas drove to George's house for the first time. He pulled up slowly, sitting in the driveway for a minute to calm his nerves. The house was small with a faded blue door and a porch light that flickered. George opened the door when Thomas stepped onto the porch as if he sensed him.

Inside, the house smelled like motor oil and laundry detergent. There were framed pictures of cars on the wall and a few old trophies on a shelf. Thomas followed George into the kitchen where they made grilled cheese sandwiches. The pan sizzled when George dropped butter onto it and the room filled with the smell of toasted bread.

They sat at the counter and ate. It was quiet at first but then they talked about school, work, and hobbies. George showed him a picture of Thomas as a baby that Becky must have sent years ago. Thomas stared at it for a long moment before setting it back down.

They walked around the house a little more. George showed him the garage and some projects he was working on. When Thomas left that night he felt like he had stepped into a part of his father's life he never knew existed.



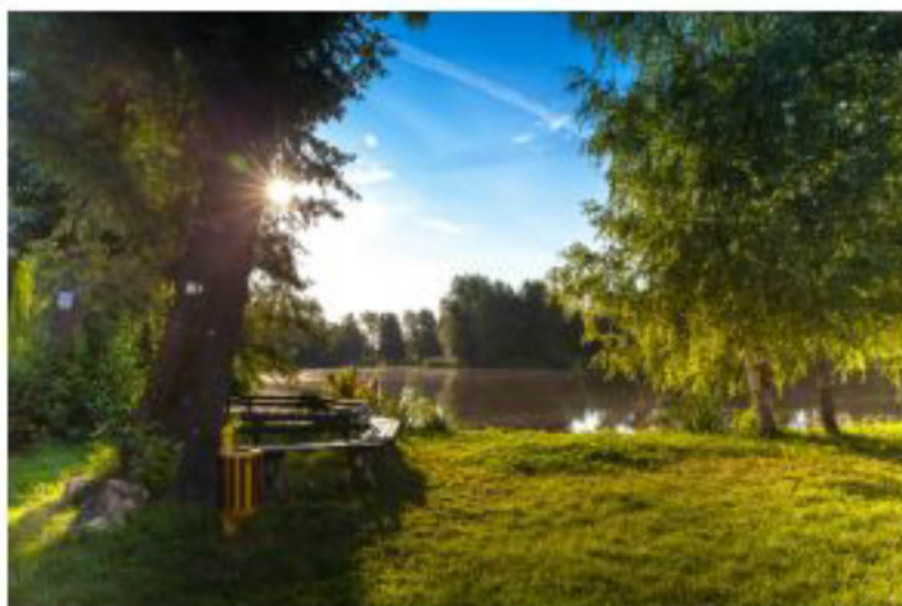
Chapter 7 - Nothing Rushed

The next week Thomas and George met again. This time they did not plan anything big. They just wanted to spend time together. They sat at a park near a set of picnic tables where the wind pushed leaves across the ground. Thomas brought drinks from a gas station and George brought sandwiches from a deli.

They talked about the future more than usual. Thomas told him about the classes he wanted to take next year. George told him about a car he wanted to fix up someday. For the first time Thomas felt like they were not just filling time. They were building something.

They walked a few laps around the park trail before sitting back down. It was calm and slow. Nothing rushed. Nothing forced. Thomas realized he was starting to look forward to these days in a way he did not expect.

When they left the sun was low and the sky was soft and orange. Thomas got into his car feeling like things were falling into place a little more each week.



Closing Thoughts

At the end of the day, true love outweighs everything else. If it's worth working for, work for it
and everything will fall into place.

A big special thanks to Fred Collins!