

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Room 101

by Garf Collins

Jake's dad stopped his car round the corner from the school gate saying, "Sorry, Jakie I'm late for work. Can you get out quickly here?"

Jake stood by the kerbside feeling frustrated. He normally stepped out of the car backwards left foot first and was handed his satchel by his Dad. Right arm through the straps then the left. Then he would put his cap on. To re-impose order on his day he counted the steps to the gate "1, 10, 11, 100..." Jake's mathematical mind always worked in binary. He derived great satisfaction in being able to covert other numbers into his favourite system instantly.

Inside he looked up his first lesson on his I-pad. 'Mrs Wardle - Room 5.' "Right that's Room 101," he said to himself. As he walked down the corridor, he converted the room numbers. "1, 10, 11,100, Room 101 this is it," he said in a loud voice.

Inside sat Mrs Wardle - a Special Needs teacher who specialised in helping gifted children. Her pupils, like Jake, often suffered from (she would say were blessed with) Asberger's Syndrome.

"Good morning Jake. I'm very pleased to see you."

Mystified as to why she should be pleased by a mundane act like entering a room, Jake sat at the usual desk and positioned his I-Pad carefully. Then he took nine pencils from his bag and carefully laid them out. Despite not understanding her fully, Jake liked Mrs Wardle. She gave him interesting things to do and was also a perfect binary match. He had asked many of the teachers how old they were.

Knowing that this was an obsession typical of his syndrome, they had mostly complied. Jake was 15, or 1111 in his system, and he had discovered that Mrs. Wardle was 31 or 11111 as he thought of it. That was a nice correlation that he had represented by the layout of his pencils. Next year they would be 100000 and 10000 – so they would stay aligned.

“Today Jake, we are going to do some programming with this software which lets you draw complex patterns using something called recursive programming....”

“I know what that is,” Jake interrupted, “and I know how the program works. I read about it on the Internet. So if you keep quiet I’ll get on with it.”

Mrs Wardle sat silently marvelling at his rapid grasp of the software and what he achieved with it. At the end of the hour she congratulated Jake on a beautiful folded helix pattern and added, “Jake I’ve something to tell you. Mrs Thompson takes these classes for older pupils. So in September you’ll be with her.”

Jake sat completely still for a few seconds. He knew that Mrs Thompson was 29 which in his terms was 11101 while he was 1111. Next year she would be 10000 when he was 11110. Neither was compatible. With silent intensity, he deleted his complex program and one by one broke the pencils in two.