

# ***Constructing A New Life***

*A short story by Henry Cavanaugh*

Hank was at wit's end. He was overworked, exhausted and miserable on a daily basis and even though the finish line was in sight he simply wasn't sure he could drag himself through those final weeks. Anybody who ever said that teachers had a nice easy life deserved to have their mouths sealed shut forever, in Hank's opinion, for there was nothing about his role as an English Literature teacher that was *nice* or *easy*. He was no stranger to stress - he'd barely made it through university without weekly therapy sessions to sort his head out - but this was on a whole new level. How much could a man possibly handle?



The summer break was only five weeks away and yet that might as well have been a whole year. His body ached out for rest that never came and his mind fell apart when not held together by quick blasts of caffeine between lessons. Evenings and weekends were spent marking essays and examination papers, every incorrect answer provoking another groan of frustration. *Do these kids ever listen?* Similes incorrectly identified as metaphors, names missing capitalisation, whole pages without any paragraph breaks. Hank felt like a man at sea and his boat was being destroyed by the violent ocean.

Growing more and more irritable by the day, Hank soon began to wonder how difficult it would be to transition out of the teaching profession for good. Surely there was something else he could do with his life, something that would ultimately be more rewarding? He couldn't stomach the thought of going back into working retail - the only thing possibly more stressful than teaching was dealing with members of the public en masse on a daily basis - but he wasn't sure exactly how else he could apply his skills and qualifications to a career. Hell, did he even have any applicable skills to do anything else - anything that would actually earn him enough money to stay afloat, that was?

The only thing that gave him any level of enjoyment was working out and even there he sometimes struggled due to his lack of energy. His work was draining the fun out of everything and it was making him bitter and miserable, something his colleagues weren't shy to point out. Hank began to resent his alarm clock; the shirts and ties; the leather shoes. Anything and everything made him irritable and sometimes not even a good session with a pair of boxing gloves and the gym's punching bag could help ease his frustrations.

His latest annoyance was due to the building works happening on the school campus right outside of his office. He didn't get a moment of peace thanks to the near-constant sounds of drilling or the obnoxious guffaws of the builders working on the site. Getting to his office was now like navigating a maze filled with burly men all in high-vis jackets, many of whom leered at him like he was somehow less of a man than them because he hadn't chosen a "hands on" career. As much as he disliked his current working position, he resented them for judging his choices. At the very least he was probably earning more than them and didn't go home reeking of sweat every night, but those felt like small comforts in truth.

While many of the builders had sagging guts and balding heads, there was one who caught Hank's eye. He was young, probably in his early twenties, and had a lean and toned body. He was handsome too, with dark hair hidden under his helmet and stubble lining his jawline. Even though he did his best not to stare Hank couldn't help but be fascinated as he saw the muscles of the other's arm bulge and flex as he moved a wheelbarrow full of bricks to the new block of classrooms the school had elected to build. Something about them being a "growing school" or some shit that only translated to "we're bringing in a lot more annoying teenagers to ruin your life" in Hank's mind.



As the days passed Hank found himself watching the young man more and more from the window in his office, often choosing to indulge in the sight-seeing rather than working on his overdue essays. Despite himself he couldn't help but admire how carefree the other man seemed, joking around with the other construction workers and soaking in the bright summer sun. Being stuck inside and utterly miserable, Hank almost envied the other for it. Why couldn't he be the one out there instead?

Those thoughts gave way to fantasies, fantasies that soon occupied his mind late at night when his hands ventured under the sheets and gentle moans escaped his lips. He knew so little about the other - not even his name - but he could so clearly see that the other wasn't drowning under an ocean of stress like he was and Hank wanted that for himself. He wanted the golden tan from working long hours under the sun and the lean muscles from constant heavy lifting and physical work. He wanted to be able to make lame, even lewd, jokes with his coworkers without overthinking and over-analyzing every little interaction. He wanted a career that didn't suck all the fun out of who he was

as an individual. He wanted the life of a construction worker; a revelation that was rather stunning to accept. There had always been a part of him that looked down at work like that, considering it menial and perhaps even humiliating for someone of his level of education, but now he craved the freedom of it. There was no doubt in his mind that it would feel less confining than his current work did.

His newfound fantasy continued to stew in his mind as the days rolled on. He struggled to stay focused when supposedly working, his gaze constantly drifting to the building site through the window in the hopes of spying the young man whose life he had come to envy. The marking pile continued to rise and yet Hank couldn't bring himself to care, not when the temptation to throw it all in and trade his career in teaching for that of a 'lowly' construction worker. The more he watched them the less it seemed like a degrading option too; it was hard and honest work and a lot more straightforward than the constant hoop-jumping that was working in education.

After a particularly gruelling day sent him rushing home as soon as the final bell of the school day rang, Hank soon found himself at the bottom of a bottle; then a second; then a third. He was tired of having teenagers talk back and swear at him and then receiving such little support from the very same bosses who claimed that their school had excellently behaved students and all the staff were given full backing. *What a load of bullshit.* His desire to escape the profession had never been so strong. He'd even typed up a letter of resignation although his contract required him to give a full term's notice meaning he would be trapped in the job until October at the earliest. He could always walk out and refuse to go back but that would only leave him short of money until he could find something. There was simply no easy fix.



His only relief that evening was indulging in his newfound fantasy. His hand snaked down into his boxers and began to toy with his cock as he closed his eyes and imagined himself to be somebody else. His fantasy self was on individual in particular: the very same young construction worker who had been the sole object of his attention in the recent days. He imagined looking down to see the other's shredded torso; particularly the six-pack abs that he had been able to peek whenever the man pulled up his shirt to wipe his face clean. He imagined the other's ripped jeans clinging around his well-trained legs and those solid tan boots surrounding his large feet while a heavy belt of tools hung around his waist. Wild as it was, even

imagining himself in a high-vis jacket was suddenly an attractive thought. It certainly beat a shirt and tie, that was for sure. There were just so stuffy and constricting, especially in the current summer heat.

Hank's breath hitched in his throat as he explored his fantasy in vivid details, thankful for his brain's capabilities of painting such vibrant images. The tipsy buzz he felt from his post-work drinks had him enjoying a sweet moment of bliss, something far too rare in his most recent days, as he built up to an eruptive climax that had him letting out an almighty roar of pleasure. His chest rose and fell as he panted for breath, totally consumed by his fantasies for the moment. Those happy thoughts held him tight and caressed him gently into a peaceful night of sleep - again something itself that had unfortunately become a rarity in recent weeks due to his building stress.

High above Hank, up in the night sky, several stars twinkled just a little bit brighter. His turmoil had not gone unnoticed and something up there - be it some higher power or something more mysterious - saw fit to pull Hank back from the brink of despair that he had been dangerously balancing upon. His mind and soul were lifted from the body of a twenty-five year old English Literature teacher and deposited somewhere he would hopefully be able to rediscover a sense of self-worth and purpose; potentially even find some genuine happiness.

The alarm rang far earlier than Hank was expecting. Just as startling was the fact that it neither seemed to be his usual brand of shrill alarm - although it was most certainly still shrill - nor was it in his bedroom, something he discovered as he finally forced his eyes open. The room around him was an absolute mess: dirty clothes thrown about the floor, the television in the corner still playing reruns of classic soccer matches and several empty bottles of beer next to the bed. "What the fuck?" he murmured, only to be surprised yet again, this time by the deep rumble of his voice. Definitely not his own.

Swinging his legs out of the bed, it took Hank all of a few moments to recognize the lean, tanned body he had awoken in. The smooth chest, the abs, the large feet; it all felt familiar. It was the tattoo on his right bicep was a dead giveaway though - it was ink that he had admired too much in recent weeks not to recognize! *It's his body! Fucking hell, I'm in his body!* His excited heart beat like a drum in a hardcore rock





song as his brain tried to keep up, the fallout of his sudden awakening in another man's body beginning to take shape. He wouldn't have to be a teacher anymore. No more shitty kids swearing at him and no more snooty 'senior educators' acting like they were god's gift to education!

As he sat there, all but frozen in place, Hank was suddenly overwhelmed by the sudden arrival of thoughts that were very clearly not his own: smoking his first cigarette at thirteen, dropping out of school at fourteen, getting hired for his uncle's construction firm at sixteen. He was twenty-one now and had no further plans for his life, he was just happy collecting a paycheck and spending it all on boozy nights out and even occasionally the private company of a buxom stripper or escort. He was even finally granted the other's name - *Taylor*. His cock jolted as he realized that he was now getting an up-front look in Taylor's mind and history. He had everything he needed to live the other's life!

Staggering out of bed and into the shower to wipe off the grime of the day before, Hank continued to sort through the tidal wave of memories that were pushing through his brain. Sorting his own thoughts and feelings out from Taylor's became a challenge - where did one end and the other begin? Getting in a morning jerk-off helped and the more he stroked, the more his mind started to sort itself out. Things settled into an order and the leftovers were beginning to fade and leave him with a clearer sense of self.

As he hit his climax and coated the glass shower door with his cum, he pushed out the memories, feelings and desires of an unhappy teacher, leaving him only with what he deemed to be his rightful headspace.



His name was Taylor, he worked for his uncle's construction firm and he was looking forward to another day under the hot summer sun showing off his trim body to the rest of the crew. They had taken to calling him "pretty boy" but in his opinion that wasn't quite right - he was hot as fuck! *Those fat ugly fuckers are just jealous that they could never pull as much pussy as me.*

Once he was out of the shower and had wolfed down a breakfast of protein pancakes, Taylor started to get dressed and considered what the day ahead would hold. The latest project his uncle had him working on was a new block of classrooms for some highly-selective school

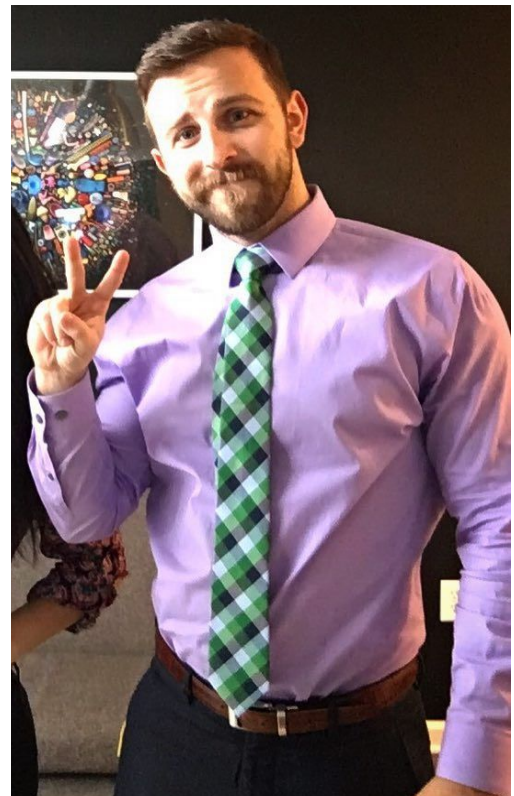
across town - *the one with all the posh fuckers*. The students and teachers alike seemed unbearable from what he had seen, but then again he had always hated school. Dropping out before he got any qualifications was still a decision he didn't regret in the slightest. Why would he? He was happy with the state of his life and couldn't possibly imagine doing anything else.

*You sure you don't want to be a teacher, Tay?* The thought made the young man laugh out loud. Where the fuck had that come from? No matter, he had a simple blunt answer that said it all: *Not a fuckin' chance!*

Across town a twenty-five year old man was beginning to stir, certain that his alarm should have woken him up already. He stared around groggily at the unfamiliar bedroom; everything neatly up and off the floor, almost meticulous in its tidiness. Taylor was seriously freaked out and that only escalated when he pushed the covers down and discovered a small coating of hair across what should have been his smooth chest and a sudden lack of any visible abdominals. He wasn't in bad shape, he just wasn't as shredded as he was supposed to be and he also seemed to be far more pale than working long hours under the sun should have allowed.

Gingerly getting out of bed and onto his feet, Taylor brought his hands up to his head in response to the sudden sharp pain that shot through it. *Am I hungover?* He couldn't remember the last time he'd actually felt the effects of drinking, having built up quite the tolerance after years of drinking with his uncle and friends. The taste of vodka remained at the back of his throat and that simply couldn't be right, Taylor was strictly a whiskey drinker when it came to spirits. What the fuck had he been doing with vodka? *Maybe that explains the hangover. Fuck whoever gave me vodka, that shit's the devil's drink.* The last time he'd had vodka he'd woken up in bed with two slutty eastern european twins and ached in places he didn't even know he could ache. Unfortunately this time it didn't even seem like he'd gotten laid, he had just... changed.

Staggering around the property until he found the bathroom, Taylor settled in front of the mirror and stared at the unfamiliar face looking back at him. "Who the fuck are you?" he rasped in a voice that came out in far more refined tones than he had



expected. He ran his hands through the thick facial hair, admiring how full it was. He'd never been able to grow anything more than a chinstrap in his own body. He looked somewhat older too and, dare he say it, *cute*. Yeah, the attraction to the male form was definitely new. His morning wood wasn't entirely unimpressive either. Deciding that there was nothing better for him to do than have a morning shower, he stepped under the stream of water and soon began to play with the unfamiliar cock.

As his arousal grew to new heights he was introduced to the thoughts of one Hank Emsfleet, an English Literature teacher who was drowning under his marking pile and fantasizing about the gorgeous construction worker he could spy from his office window. A small voice in his mind whispered that said construction worker was actually *him* but wasn't that ridiculous? He could so vividly remember graduating from school, going to university and feeling the pre-interview jitters before scoring the teaching position at one of the most respected schools in the local area. Any consideration that he had dropped out of school to become a builder was simply absurd!



As Taylor shot his load with a desperate whimper, he unwittingly became the new Hank and was left leaning against the cold tiles of the bathroom wall, the stream of water pattering lightly against his back. He remained there for some time, sorting through his thoughts before finally finishing his shower and drying himself off in a towel. Stepping back out into his bedroom and noticing the alarm clock, he groaned in disappointment as he realized that he was now running late for work. *Bloody typical. Just the start to the day I needed. Can't wait to get yelled at for showing up right before the first bell again.*

At the very least Hank hoped he could catch a sight of the handsome stud later on - what else was the point of even going in anyway? He was still considering quitting when he next got the chance, not that he knew what he'd do after that...