



NARRATIVE IMPERATIVE

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GOAL 1: No Poverty

Roll the dice: Poverty #1

Roll the dice. Take a chance. Change fate. Go on, you might win!

It started off small. My Mama huddled around a poorly lit fire, with me, her firstborn, only a month away. A slight tremor shook the ground as the slightly reptilian looking man threw the six-sided dice. "Snakeyes, how unfortunate. An unescapable life of poverty surrounded by unreachable exits faces your child, just like you". With a grin, he disappeared into the smoke.

Mr. Snakeyes always rolled the dice. Mama sat at the creaky dining table, following those wretched dice with her haunted ochre eyes. A double two. We were destined to eat that night. After a meager meal, he would snatch them up and roll them across our stained tablecloth. A good night was six and up. Bad nights meant another hardship to deal with.

On my supposed first day of school, we dressed as well as we could and walked to the nearest public school, about three kilometers away from our home. Mr. Snakeyes followed us, like he always did. His teeth were always displayed in a pearly white smile, grinning as we continued to struggle with all of his throws. His eyes, bright yellow with tinges of rainforest green were always watching, waiting for their next opportunity to roll his wretched dice. Mr. Snakeyes always liked to skip next to me and whisper in my ears. I would always lash out to bat him away, but he would just laugh, and rattle his dice in his cupped palms.

We reached the school doors, tired and even more apprehensive of Mr. Snakeyes. His chuckling had increased in volume now and it rattled the flowerpots around us. The principal, Miss Merlot, was inviting and shook our hands until she reached him. Her complexion paled and she withdrew her hand timidly, eyes wide with disgust. Mr. Snakeyes just snickered and exclaimed, "Watch out Cathy! Wouldn't want to be caught short this month would we?" Cathy Merlot glared and ushered us inside with withering glances towards the now-giggling dice man.

Miss Merlot's office was larger than our home, a beautiful space filled with blossoming flowers and tidy photo frames. A particular photo took Mr. Snakeyes interest and he picked it up off the mahogany desk. "Ethan, right? Nice kid. A shame I rolled snakeyes on him" He replaced the frame, slightly tilted so I could see the picture. A small boy was lying in a hospital bed surrounded by what seemed to be



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millions of tubes. The brightest thing in the photo was his smile, which radiated hope. I started to feel sick as I thought about what this nasty statement could mean. Cathy's face turned a deep shade of burgundy but she did not retaliate to the obvious bait.

"Now, about your child's education." The principal was completely blocking out the dice-man and his intrusive eyes. "We have read the papers and the school board has decided..." Miss Merlot was interrupted by a loud hissing laugh.

"That disheveled little rat? Here?" The rest of the sentence was cut off by more hissing. Mr. Snakeyes suddenly composed himself, straightened his crimson tie and continued. "It's all very well saying these things but the dice haven't spoken yet." And with those very words, he threw his wretched dice across the neatly organized desk. Papers were scattered around the room, looking like very large snowflakes. Not one piece settled around the dice's two black eyes that stared directly towards the vast ceiling. My heart dropped to my ankles. Miss Merlot's eyes were wider than the dinner plates I had seen people dine on in the restaurants. Mama screamed obscenities at the dice-man who was looking quite steadily into my now-tearful eyes. "Uh oh kid," He whispered with a grin: " Snakeyes."