

THE RUNAWAY

BOYS

ROGER

I woke up out of my bed super fast. I turned my alarm off, put my clothes on, and went to the bathroom. After I got ready I headed downstairs to make some cereal. Lucky Charms, my favorite since I was nine, I'm 14 now. As I poured the milk it all weighed to one side and the whole bowl spilled over. As I watched the bowl turn to the side, I immediately stopped pouring but it was too late. Hundreds of pieces of cereal scattered across

the floor. This morning can't get any worse. "ROGER STEVENS!" my mom yelled. I didn't respond.

I heard her loudly march down the steps. She came down and saw the mess that I made."What did you do??" She quietly said aggressively. Gritting her teeth as the words

came out her mouth. SCREECH- That was the sound of the bus. I ran off. "I WASN'T DONE TALKING TO YOU BOY." I ignored her and hopped on my bus. I saw my friend Devon sitting by himself in the back of the bus, he looked pretty sad. I tried to talk to him but he had his face buried in his backpack so I sat down somewhere else.

DEVON

This city of Chicago is crazy, its hard for anyone to survive. Roger and I are from two different sides of the city, I'm from the east side and Roger is from Englewood, that's the south side There is nothing I really do, I hate school and I'm not smart. Roger and I used to play basketball but I stopped playing.

I got lazy and depressed. I started getting bad grades and getting in trouble in school, which caused my mom to trip out on me everyday.

ROGER

I took a break to go to the vending machine to get a nice cold lemon-lime Gatorade. I put my money in and the machine jammed. “Aw c'mon man,” I uttered, “Can this day get any worse?”

As I bent down on my knees, Devon came up behind me and shook the machine.

The bottle fell into the chamber and a bunch of coins spat out. “Thanks, man, I appreciate it.” I said. “I got you man,” Devon said. “What was up with you today on the bus?” I asked, “I was gonna sit next to you but it seemed like you didn't want me to.” “I don't know man I've just been really down lately, I don't really want to talk about it.”

His face faded to a frown as he tilted his head down. I've never seen Devon like this before, he's always been bright and smiles. I gotta know what's got into him “ Listen man,” I stated, “we're like brothers we've always been here for each other, I won't let that change.” “Yeah man, I know you're always here for me, I just don't wanna feel like a sissy, you know.” “ Listen man if you need something I'm always here, remember that.” I said. “Thanks man.”

Said Devon. He gulped. “I can see tears in your eyes, you are not okay bro,” I said. Devon walked off.

Back at home, I drop my bookbag, take my shoes off and make my way to my room.

My phone rings. It's Devon. "Yo bro what's up?" I say. Devon paused, There was loud screaming in the background, slamming, and that stupid dog barking.

"We gotta meet man, I'm in some bad trouble with my mom." His voice is shaking. I rush downstairs to the garage and get on my bike.

I'm sitting here, waiting for him. It's been 20 minutes, so I decide to call him. He says he's on his way and will be here in five minutes. Knowing Devon, five minutes means fifteen minutes. He finally arrives. But he has a big black trash bag with him. "What's up with the bag?" I ask.

"My mom pushed me to my limit. It's over." When he said that, he looked me straight in the eye, I saw the bruise on his face. I don't wanna mention it to him. He gave me a ghostly look. "I ran out of there, " he shivered, "I couldn't take it anymore, I can't live with her." Roger took a big breath, "Well you know what, I'm going with you." He said proudly, his chest pumped. "Are you sure?" Devon asked "you don't have to-" "I'm going to." Roger interrupted.

DEVON

3 Days later, Devon and Roger are hiding out in an abandoned house in Englewood. Roger checks his phone on the news tab, the heading states, Two teenage boys missing from their homes. With a picture of both of them on the front. “What is this man!” Devon yells angrily, “Our mom’s probably put this site up.” Roger buries his face in his palms.

Meanwhile, back at the police station, both Devon and Roger’s mothers are arguing with each other and the police.

“Yall should be worrying about helping our children.” Roger’s mother yells, “Instead of killing them all the time!” “Listen ma'am we're doing everything we can to help your boys.” The lieutenant argues. Devon’s mom is sitting on the bench, at the back of the room, smoking a Newport cigarette.

As ashes fall on the floor, so do her tears. She thinks about how Devon was as a baby, how everything was perfect with her family. Her husband was still there, and her baby was still pure. Then it all fell down, her husband left, but drugs came. Her life was never the same after that. And neither was Devon’s, to this day her boyfriend beats her and to this day she can't put down those drugs.

ROGER

Devon is still asleep, snoring louder than a bear. Roger slaps him on the back of his head to wake him up. "Put your shoes on, Dev we gotta go." Said, Roger. Devon rubs his eyes and puts his shoes on. Back at the police station, the cops put out a BOLO for Roger and Devon.

Three squad cars go out looking for them. "You wanna stop at this 7-Eleven for a sec." Roger nods. Devon immediately puts his hands on a Honey-Bun. "Get something else for once." Says Roger. It's always been his favorite snack since Roger could remember. Devon bursts into laughter, it was the first time he smiled in a while.

The clerk gives them both a look, he makes a call to 911 while Roger and Devon are distracted. 3 police cars show up, one car pulls up and looks inside the store. "That's them." He whispered, "Let's go get them" All the cars turn their sirens on, Roger's eyes go wide. They kick in the door and put pistols to their face. They grab their arms, plugging them to the ground, and putting cuffs on them. Devon tries to run off on them. Tears fall down his face, he's furious, blacking out with anger. The officer grabs his legs, causing him to fall, then balls up his fist and punches him in the face. They ride in the cop cars back to the station to see their mothers, Devon's eye is swelled up and purple, the cuffs are too tight on his wrists so he can't feel his fingers. Roger's mind is racing with thoughts. Am I going to jail? What's gonna happen to Devon? What is my mom gonna think? "We found your boys coming out of a convenience store." The lieutenant says, "Why is my son in handcuffs sir?" Roger's mother asks aggressively.

The lieutenant goes silent. "Huh!?" Roger's mother bangs on the arm of her chair.

“Well, we found a gun in their possession.”

He said. She went silent. Her mouth trembled as she turned her eyes to Roger. “You.....had a gun??” She yelled. “No, I didn’t I swear!” Said, Roger. Roger was scared, he thought the police framed them.

DEVON

Devon’s body was shaking. All he could think about is him going to jail, the cycle of jail and death in his family is horrible.

And what's more depressing is that he knows he can't escape it. He thought that the gun wasn't a big deal, that it was just him holding it for protection. But he thinks, would he even really use it? Is he man enough? He didn't want to admit that it was him that had the gun. But he couldn't let Roger go down for his doings.

“Officer..,” he whispered, “It was me.” “What was you?” the officer asked. “I had the gun, not Roger.” Devon was breaking down, his words stopping and starting, “Don’t arrest him, it was all

me it wasn't his fault!" Devon cried. A tear dropped from Roger's eye. Devon's mom buried her palms in her face. Devon glanced at her doing it. "Don't act as if you care now mom!" Devon aggressively cried, "You never gave two cents about me! Now you wanna judge me and be disappointed?" His mom stared at him in awe, but she knew she'd done wrong. "I always cared about you baby boy," She stuttered at first, "It's just that everything changed, and I- I didn't know what to do, I'm sorry son." "We're a family, we have to forgive each other." Roger said. Everyone came in for a hug. Devon cried heavily, Roger came around and put his arm around his shoulder. Devon felt the warmth from his mom's arms, he hasn't felt that since he was young. Devon and his mom both smile at each other.