

Parable from the school yard to illustrate Heritage Hell

A boy spent long days and all his pocket money fixing his old pedal car. He did it for the love of working on old cars: he didn't do it to show off. It was soon much admired by other old pedal car owners. New car owners preferred their own.

One day he took it to school where it was noticed by the playground gang. They liked the old car because it looked quirky compared to their new ones. They decided to take over the car "on behalf of the other boys" just to exercise their powers. They couldn't steal it so they set up a set of rules for the boy and his car which would give them control of the car. He protested but they ruled the playground.

It was old so it needed a lot of repairs and maintenance. The gang would not allow him to change things to make the house more usable. He would have to pay all the expenses including the extra costs of doing things their way. It didn't make sense. They appointed one of the gang members and gave him draconian powers to enforce the new rules. The boy asked them to give him some of their pocket money but they declined as they had their own expenses.

The boy was promised special incentives by the gang, like allowing carry extra passengers. One Friday he asked to be allowed to take a friend but he was told they had changed the rules and this promise would not be fulfilled.

The gang allowed new boys to crowd their huge lorries all around his car, spoiling the pleasure of his car. They didn't mind as long as the lorries didn't spoil their view of the old car.. This was even against school's fairness rules. Other children saw what was happening but didn't really understand so they didn't get involved. He became most anxious and unhappy

The boy appealed to the headmaster who dismissed his whingeing and promptly changed the school rules to favour the new boys and their activities. The boy was warned not to take his moans to the Education Dept as they always sided with the headmaster.

Eventually the boy decided to sell his car but nobody was prepared to buy it as they had seen how badly he was treated by the gang. He offered a third discount to no avail. The gang, too, declined to buy it as they enjoyed the situation at no cost to themselves and they certainly would not think of lifting their powers. One of the gang said "Why should we spend our money when others think we all own it. We have all we need from just looking at the car. A car is a car except of its looks." Another said "You little money grabber. How can you think of yourself when the car belongs to all of us? Bah! Putting yourself ahead of the gang!"

He needed the money from the sale to buy another car. Other pedal cars of the same size cost fifty percent more than his best offer. He also wanted to pay for his future

He heard of somebody who was looking at the injustice as it sadly affected many boys in a similar position (in other schools). He desperately hoped they would lift the gang's harsh rules and allow him to live with his car like all the other boys.

Now, many decades later, this boy owns a heritage house. He remembers his boyhood experiences and sadly sees himself trapped in exactly the same position. Exactly! And again, the authorities exercise their power unbeknown to the general public. His family is trapped in what has now become known as Heritage Hell.

What would you do?

620 words