

Sinbad
by Justin McGonigle

“What would happen if?” I thought. “What would happen if I really tried?”

My 7th grade teacher said that we could dress up in costume for our book report. “I’ll ransack my Mother’s drawers and closet and find the perfect outfit for Sinbad,” I planned in my head. “Sinbad the Sailor has a fancy wardrobe: head gear with pants and shoes to match. His jewelry is abundant and he has a big sword.” The aluminum foil and cardboard sword came out great.

As I went through my Mother’s wardrobe, the morning of the presentation, I was giddy with excitement. “I’ll surprise everyone,” I laughed to myself. “It’s going to be so funny.”

I found everything I needed. I found head gear, a shirt, pants, shoes, stockings, a scarf, jewelry. Everything. I stuffed it all in a bag and quickly got to work on the sword. I cut out a sword shape from a big piece of cardboard and wrapped aluminum foil over the part that would be the blade. I left the handle bare. I was able to hide my haul well enough to avoid detection going to school.

There I was, first period, in the bathroom, putting on my costume with my fake sword next to me. I think the teacher knew what I was up to when I asked her to go to the bathroom to change. She gave me a look. I don’t think anyone else had caught on.

I was all decked out. My 2 inch, high heels, clicked and clacked as I walked up the long hallway towards my classroom. I was both nervous and excited. I opened the classroom door and closed it behind me. I smiled and held up my sword. Someone was there to take a picture (it might have been the teacher). My friend sent me that picture years later (I almost fell out of my chair when I saw it. It had been 40 years).

I don’t remember much from my presentation, but I got an A and I was proud of myself.

I retained my love for performance and later on I joined the chorus and was in several plays. Now it’s mostly singing Karaoke and singing every year at Christmas.

The idea of “What would happen if?” never left me. To this day, I still use it to keep the gate open between me and the impossible.