

Once upon a time, a baby girl was born on a sunny morning with no complications other than that she was born bottom first. She came into this world bottom side up, but no less healthy and fat, crying sweetly from sapphire blue eyes. Her mother, on the other hand, suffered severe complications and died before the sun set that night. Because of the usual direction of her birth, and joy it brought to all those save her mother, the baby was named Happy in Hindsight and came to be known simply as Hindsight.

To honor her mother and immortalize the sunny nature of her birthday, Hindsight was placed in the sunniest room in the house. The room had been given glass walls and a glass roof to allow the sun to beat straight in at any and all hours that it happened to be out. In fact, it was designed in such a way that omitted escape from direct sunlight. As Hindsight lay in her cradle, the sun warmly engulfed her all morning and all afternoon. The sun's rays bestowed upon her a terrible sunburn.

But they also bestowed upon the young girl a sense of hope, and despite her shriveled skin, she often looked to the sun for inspiration. Because of this, she was legally blind by the time she was seven, for after years of staring into direct sunlight, all she could see when she opened her eyes were a thousand little black pinpoints with hazy gray halos floating around them.

Despite her wrinkly, red, bumpy skin and compromised vision, Hindsight grew up to be remarkably beautiful, kind, caring, and happy, as her name had promised. When she turned sixteen, her father explained to her that her name was a blessing: no matter what went wrong, she could look back on everything happily in hindsight, and see that all bad things that happened had really been good things in disguise. On that very day, the day of her sixteenth birthday, her father was savagely attacked by a pack of wolves and absolutely torn limb from limb. By extreme luck, a marvelous doctor was passing through town just that day, and by the miracles of medicine was granted to piece the man back together again, effectively saving his life. In a mere two weeks, Hindsight's father was smiling and laughing with her again and in all senses seemed to be back to normal. Finally, he tired of being bedridden,

and with her help, clambered to the floor. After his first few steps, he realized he was nimble as ever. They walked through the meadows behind the house for the rest of the day. Come evening, they departed for town to have dinner, and as they walked, Hindsight left a trail of seashells that she had collected earlier that morning. So quick a recovery from so devastating an injury had never been witnessed prior in history.

The next day, Hindsight's father was walking down the street to town, tripped on a seashell, and died. Such grief had never been felt in the town before or since. Everyone in town lamented the loss for months and months, and Hindsight never went to the beach again.

Now one of these months, it happened that the rent was due. Hindsight had no money of her own, nor any access to her father's, nor any way to make her own, so she called a lawyer to help her decide what to do. The lawyer was a charming man who demonstrated how to access her father's money and then walked out with it. Right before he left, he told her that he'd be back the next day to buy her house, and indeed selling her house to him would be her only hope of ever making any kind of money.

The next morning, while it was still dark, Hindsight realized through the shattering of glass and the crashing of floorboards that her house must have been situated above a large sinkhole. That's what she assumed, anyway, as she stood before her front steps and watched her mansion disappear below the Earth's surface. Front steps to chimney, it vanished before her very eyes, taking everything with it except for the red blanket that she held about her shoulders and the slippers on her feet. She stood for a moment at the grave of her only hope of amassing any kind of money, then set off down the road.

Soon she came to a fetid swamp. It was infested with mosquitoes and disease. It smelled like something Hindsight wished not to remember. On the upside, there was a rickety old broken down cart half buried in the mud. Hindsight pulled and tugged, but the cart was stuck as if by a vacuum seal. She crossed her arms and tied

her hair behind her ears with marsh grass, and eventually she was able to use the leverage of a large, thick plank to free the cart from the swamp's grasp. For the first time since her father died, she smiled. The sun suddenly broke through the clouds and shown upon the cart, and Hindsight broke into dance and song. Her sudden outburst alerted nearby hunters, who shot at her from their place among the grass and wounded her substantially. She cut the bullet out of her ankle herself with a rusty spoke that she ripped off the cart's wheel, and lay alone in the swamp for many weeks, teetering on the cusp of death. Her ankle healed eventually but left her with a limp for the rest of her life.

Once on her feet again, she washed the cart down with bog mud until it glistened in the sun. She mended the wheels and sanded the seats until it shone like new. All she needed were some animals to pull it. She tried hitching some finches to the cart, but they mostly fluttered around helplessly beneath the reins. She was close to giving up when suddenly, illuminated by the sun's rays, a bony, knobby donkey wandered into the marsh. Hindsight seized it and hooked it to the cart in her joy. The donkey was so emaciated and old that it died before it could take one step. Beside herself with desperation, Hindsight gnashed her teeth and hitched herself to the cart and pulled it successfully to dry land.

She was hungry and exhausted. She was pulling an empty cart across miles of rocky terrain. She realized the futility of this endeavor, and decided to load the cart with something, if only to give it a purpose. She filled the cart with heavy stones and increased her fatigue ten fold, but at least then the cart seemed more justified.

One night a terrible storm came and a bolt of lightning hit her cart, setting it ablaze. The rain pummeled the dirt and Hindsight, soaking both through and through, but it was not enough to put out the flames that roared uncontrollably in the night. The next morning, Hindsight solemnly picked a sizable rock out of the ashes of the cart and set off again.

Her fatigue overcame her. She lay dying on the road, and she knew it. But just then, the sun appeared and beat harshly down upon the barren earth. She felt her

burns begin to blister once more, and comfort flooded back to her. In the end she knew she would always be Happy in Hindsight.