

MY BIRTHDAY WISH

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I am Yolando Carimbocas and I live on St Vincent Street in the bustling town of Tunapuna.

My family inherited this old, wooden house that is situated halfway along our street. My Dad works on a farm for a businessman, and my mother is a cashier at a nearby supermarket. I am told that I am a kind, loving, proud boy. I have many good friends. For this, I am very happy.

One Sunday morning, my mother observed that I was particularly quiet.

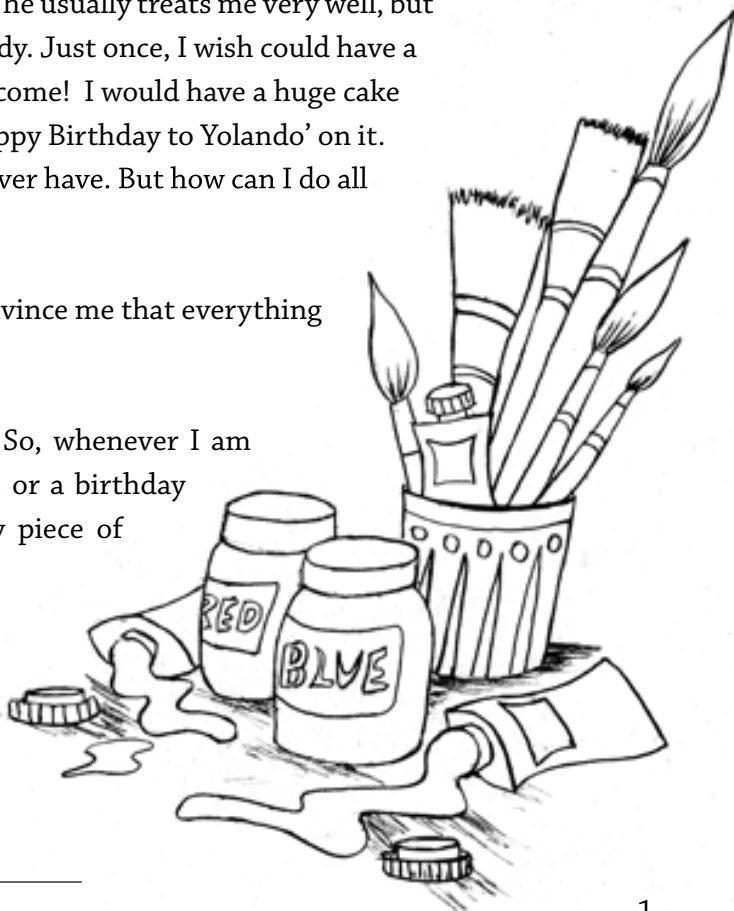
"What's wrong, boy?" Mummy asked me, as she had never before seen me in such a mood.

"Mom, I just can't take any more of this!" I told her, "Almost every weekend a friend invites me to spend some time with him and he usually treats me very well, but I will never be able to do the same for anybody. Just once, I wish could have a big birthday party and tell all my friends to come! I would have a huge cake with a picture of my face and the words, 'Happy Birthday to Yolando' on it. That will be the best birthday party I could ever have. But how can I do all this if I have no money?"

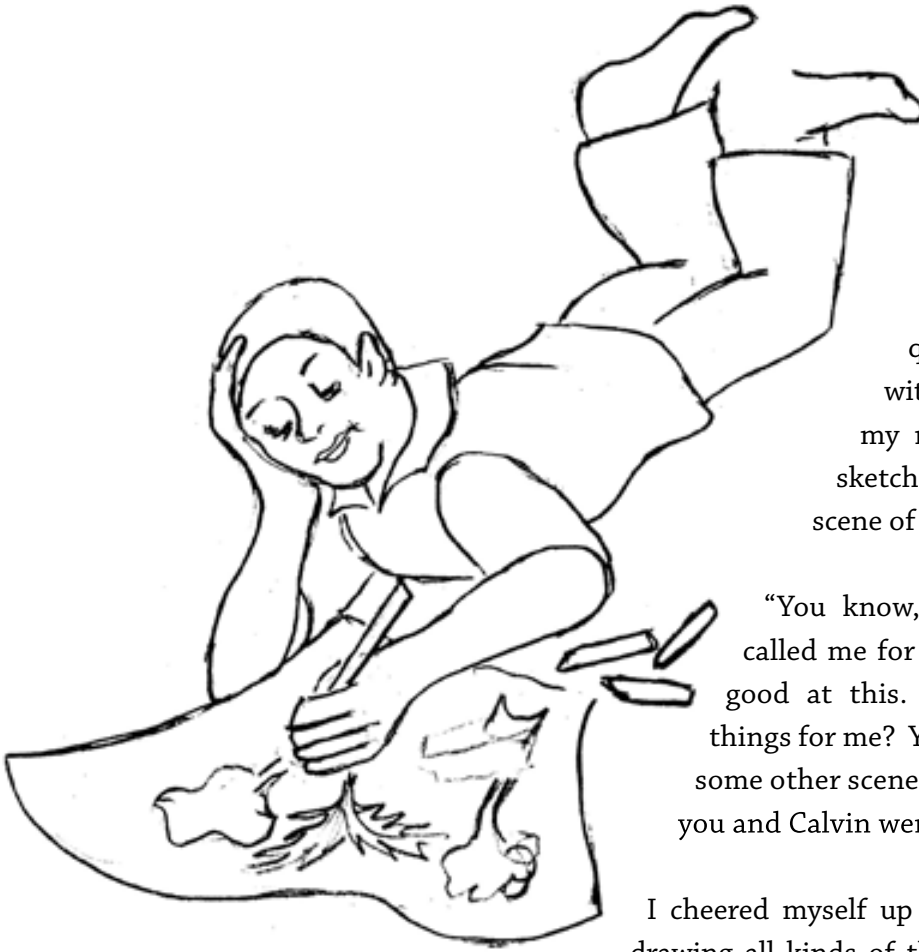
It took three days before my Mom could convince me that everything would be all right.

I am blessed with a skill: I can draw well. So, whenever I am sitting quietly wondering about my future, or a birthday party, I usually do some sketching on any piece of paper that I find.

My parents noticed my talent and often brought home sheets of brown paper and cut-up cardboard for me to use in my art.







Also, my teacher who had seen me drawing in school, kindly gave me some extra poster paints from her cupboard.

One day, while I was sitting quietly in my room, drawing with my crayons and paints, my mother observed that I had sketched a particularly beautiful scene of our neighbourhood park.

“You know, Lando,” - that’s what she called me for short - “you are really quite good at this. Can you draw some other things for me? You know, people around you, some other scenes. For example, that last time you and Calvin went to catch fish by the river?”

I cheered myself up during the next few weeks, drawing all kinds of things. I was so pleased and proud of all my drawings that I stuck them round the walls of our house. Just imagine four walls of “my art”!

By the end of the week, working for an hour every day, from six in the morning, and from five in the evening, I had drawn more than a dozen pictures. They amazed my parents and sisters.

‘Mom Carimbocas’ was determined to help me make my birthday wish come true. Of course, she did not tell me what she was planning.

One Saturday she encouraged me to stick some of my drawings on our front wall. There were pictures of animals, children playing together, people in their neighbourhood and even a picture of our house. Each picture was bright and colourful.

My family was surprised that many people slowed down when walking or driving by the house, just to look at the paintings. Mom thought that if people liked any of the drawings, maybe she could encourage them to buy one for a low price. We could use that money for my birthday party.

One day, our neighbour Mrs Wellington visited us.

"I don't remember seeing these fabulous drawings before. Who did them? Someone can earn a lot of money by selling these. In fact, I would pay fifty dollars for this one with my dog Mitzy in it," she said as she sat on a bench in the living room.

Soon the word spread about my drawings and one day after school the Librarian Mrs Andrews paid us a visit.

"Would you like to display your art on the walls of our library?" she asked me.

"Thank you," I said, "that would be just great."

By the end of that week, many parents and other visitors to the library admired my drawings and were even willing to buy them.

With the \$800 that I eventually earned, I was able to throw a big party and invite all my friends.

Sometimes, you really cannot tell how things will turn out. Indeed my birthday wish had come true.

THE END

