

## *An Autobiographical Essay*

New Orleans, Louisiana...1991 a child is born to succeed, but also to endure adversity at its most refined. "It's a boy!" they must have said, and right out of the womb, the child was swaddled in a blanket of ignorance, seeking to unwrap himself with curiosity.

Named Camille Michael Anderson, I was third in line to bear the weight of being born into sin. A year and a half later, my third sibling was birthed into sin of the same. Two girls and two boys completed my mother's happy family, but not for long. Shortly after my little sister was born, my father died of Leukemia. I was only two years old, so of course, I shoulder no related grief.

Mourning her husband's death, my mother packed three of her children and we set out for Dallas Texas in '93. My oldest sister, however, did not join, nor was she raised with us. At the moment of that child's birth, my mother was not yet old enough to care for her properly; the state took care of her.

A few years later, my mother found a man who she had hoped would replace the deepening void of sorrows, but to no avail. I witnessed a curious crush graduate to a relationship of violence and relentless arguing, filling the void with anger and hatred until finally, she left him to our home and we were branded homeless.

Those domestic violence shelters weren't the best of living situations, but for a boy at the age of six, they were the perfect opportunity for me to make friends with children who shared a similar past. My mother instilled in us, not a longing for possessions, but the ability to happily adapt to what would be looked at by others as an unfortunate situation. And what more could a child want other than friends and happiness?

On and off, my mother would subject herself to that man. Sometimes, he would be a great father, and other times, his abusive nature easily distorted my perception of who he was. Each time she went to him, I lost more friends, and every time she left, even more.

This, of course, didn't exactly aid in a steady education either. By the time I was 9, I had attended no less than 7 different schools in 5 cities between the states of Texas, Mississippi, and California, but in the end, we'd primarily end up in Texas again.

School was a challenge. I never really received attention at home due to my hectic life, and lord knows how much I tried, but never did I prevail. This turned me into an attention seeker in school. From class disruptions to obstinate behavior, everyone would know who Camille

Anderson was. I was eventually diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder – a misdiagnosis to say the least.

I was wrongfully placed in classes with those who shared this disorder, but their behaviors were FAR more destructive and out of control. Yes, the older I got, the more that sinful likeness became more evident in my surroundings. Julius Dorsey Elementary school, it was the most stable institution in which I was educated, running three years. My mother was single at the time, so it made sense.

Every day I was afraid of being hurt by them. That class of mine was full of bullies who'd been constantly in and out of school, mental health facilities, and juvenile corrections. I wasn't like them, and it pained me to have to suffer that class. My initial response was anger and sadness.

A few years later, due to more unfortunate circumstances, my family and I moved to Kansas City, Mo. Reflection cause me to treat my schooling like I would my other tribulations. I set out to prove that I didn't belong in those types of classes, to prove that I was indeed misdiagnosed and that I was smarter than my classmates were. I hit the ground running and slowing down was not an option. And that's when it began. "He's so smart" the teachers would say. "He's so well-behaved. Why is he in here?" I'd hear the faculty whisper. By the age of 14, I had finally been dismissed of this disorder and placed in mainstream classes.

I fought hard for that outcome and from that, perseverance fostered itself. With each new accomplishment, I felt untouchable, that no matter what came my way, I chose the nature of its result. By this time, my big brother had gone off to the military at 17, leaving my sister and me behind.

Growing homesick, my sister and I moaned and groaned about how much we missed Texas, so when the lease on our three bedroom apartment was up, we moved back to Texas...this time, I was returning as a teenage boy shaping himself into the man he'd be for the rest of his life.

By age 17, I formed a relationship with the first person to have ever been named as my significant other. After a long distance relationship of five months, I decided to take on independence.

We left our respective states and traveled to Denver, Colorado together. There, I obtained my first job as a cutlery salesman, while he worked at a restaurant.

For seven months, we lived comfortable lives, but as time progressed, his true nature began to reveal itself. Soon after, his immaturity spiked and I could no longer retain my composure with him. I saw my mother suffer being in and out of a relationship with a man she "loved" and I would not follow in her footsteps. As such, I did what she finally did after years. I left him to our house and took shelter in a youth facility.

Urban Peak was the name of the place in which I lived. It was a place infested with immaturity and those who lacked hygienic education. But beyond the funk and puerility, there were those special few who were close enough to me that I'd call them friends.

To my surprise, these friends were anime fans and we bonded over the topic. I had been and anime fan for a few years at the time and it is what inspired me to become a writer...to create stories beyond human capabilities in a world of my design. More than anything, my days were spent writing in my spare time.

With little to no work experience, I completed a job training program while there and afterward, my mother bought me a ticket to Texas and I was homeward bound, taking with me the many experiences I had in my year of living in Colorado.

There are many examples of hardship for me to recount, but I've not the time to convey them all.

2015, still in the chrysalis of the man that will bloom forth, I stand as a person with a passion for writing, and a keen technological sense. Hardship has become my best friend, one that follows and grants new experiences, interests, fortification, and above all, knowledge.

In the few years prior, employment was a lot less hard to come by. I had a well-polished and stable resume at my disposal with three years of work experience. From becoming a tutor at an academy school for a year, to assisting doctors and other medical professionals with meaningful use of their technology. I even leased a couple of my own apartments in the years. I received my diploma back in 2011 from Cassata High School, so it was no longer a barrier.

Waged at \$12.79 an hour, I quickly realized that it wasn't quite as much as I needed to live as comfortably as I would prefer. Searching, online, I came across a few jobs that would pay me \$15 an hour, but with my three years of customer service experience, I was just one year shy of the required 4 that I continuously saw.

I needed to gain a fourth year of experience, but I didn't want to take a job simply to quit after a year for as better wage, so I looked online again for a better way, and that's when I found North Texas Job Corps. I Dove in and found their office administration trade. Looking at a brief description of it, I could see that I could use it to translate a year of customer service experience.

I did quite a bit of research and I was not happy with what I found. Many negative stories and comments flooded the reviews. Naturally, I was a tad apprehensive, but I quickly recalled my capacity for beating the odds. So it was settled; my entry date was 9/21/15,

To be completely honest, it's not nearly as bad as what I read. Sometimes, I could even say I enjoy it here. I've found a handful of staff and students who support me, and I feel as if I simply cannot complete this journey without their help.

As of 12/4/15, I am at about 20% completion of my trade and it can go nowhere but up from here. Moving forward, I will employ the teachings of my hardships whenever I see fit.

They say “put your best foot forward,” but not me. I shall charge in with BOTH feet on the ground and jump, full body, toward the future I’ve planned for myself. The manager I aspire to be, I will become. The renowned novel writer I plan to be, I will become; and if adversity ever tries to stand in my way, well...that’s when I shine the most!