

The Road

An Allegory

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“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate, and broad is the Road that leads to Destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the Road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Matthew 7:13-14. (NIV)

The Road

“Let me help ya up, Laddie,” said the stranger. Two strong hands grabbed me on each side of my bicep and yanked me to my feet. I took a step and stumbled again. The strong hands held me up a second time.

“C’mon, we’ve got to keep moving, or we’re both goners.”

Dazed, I mumbled, “Thanks.”

“Quite the bump ya got there.”



My head ached. I reached up and gingerly touched the growing goose egg on my forehead. “Did you see what happened?”

“Aye, a hole opened at your feet. You didn’t see it. You tripped on the edge and nearly fell into it. If you fell in, you’d be gone for good. Instead, you fell on the Road, bumped your head, and were about to be trampled. I had a chance, so I nabbed ya. Many fall, but few help them up.”

“Thanks for grabbing me,” I said. I stuck out my hand, “My name is Chris.”



“I’m Fingal,” he said, shaking my hand. “Have you been on the Road long?”

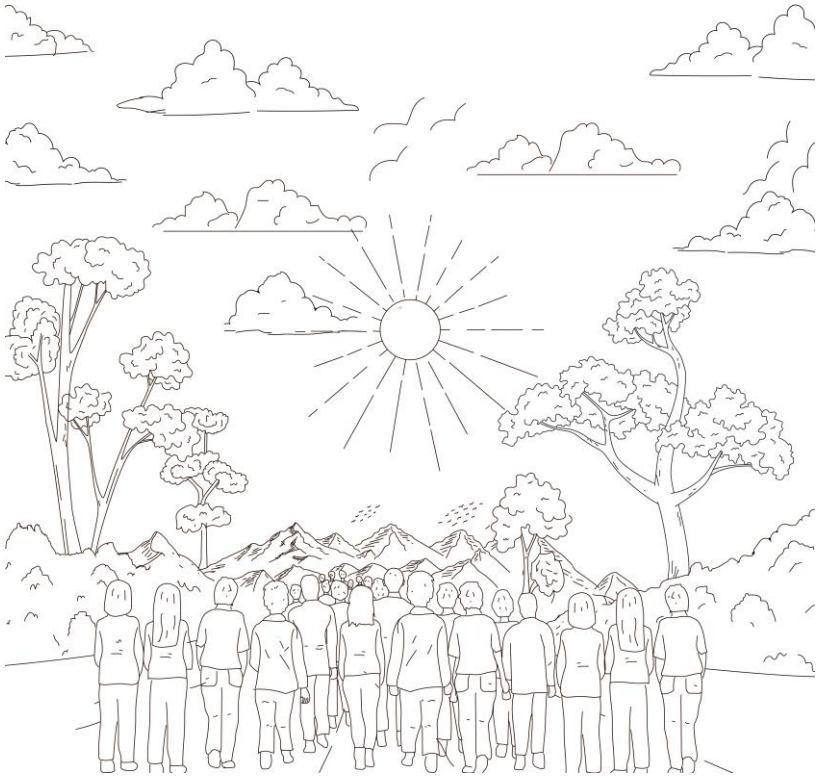
“Eighteen years. I turned eighteen two months ago, but I lost my parents when the flow slowed, and everybody jammed together about a month ago. In all the jostling and pushing, we got separated. I’ve been looking for them since.”

“I’ve been on the Road for some twenty-eight years. An’ being separated from loved ones on the Road is common. But fear not Laddie; we shall walk together for a while and help each other.”

The Road.

I think a lot about the Road. *Why is it here? Why are we on it?*

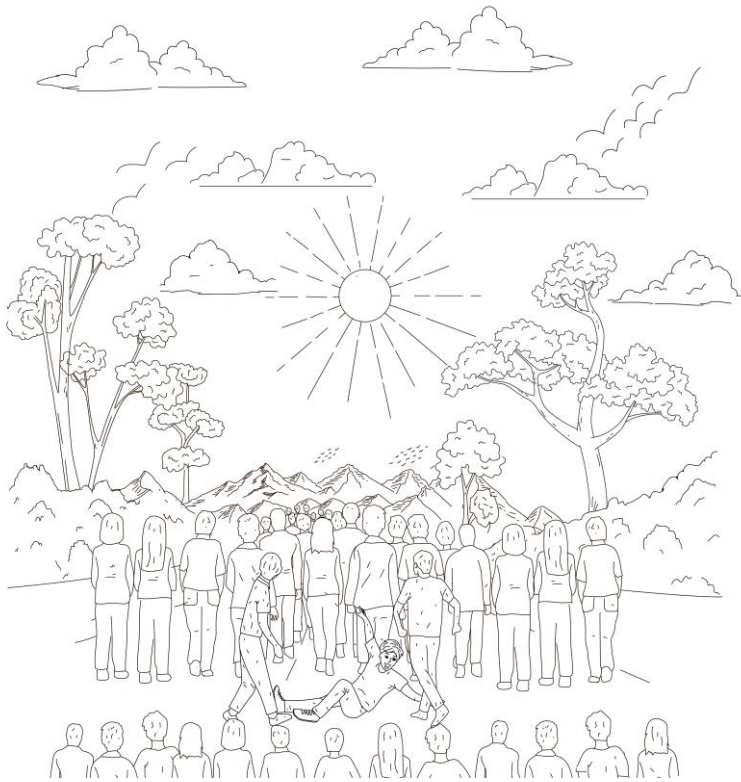
The Road is wide. I can barely make out the far side when I stand on edge. Everybody walks it. It's smooth and asphalt gray, with a bit of loose debris swirling about. The Road is flat at a level from side to side, front to back.



The Road is comfortable. The bright Sun warms my face, and the gentle Breeze cools my brow.

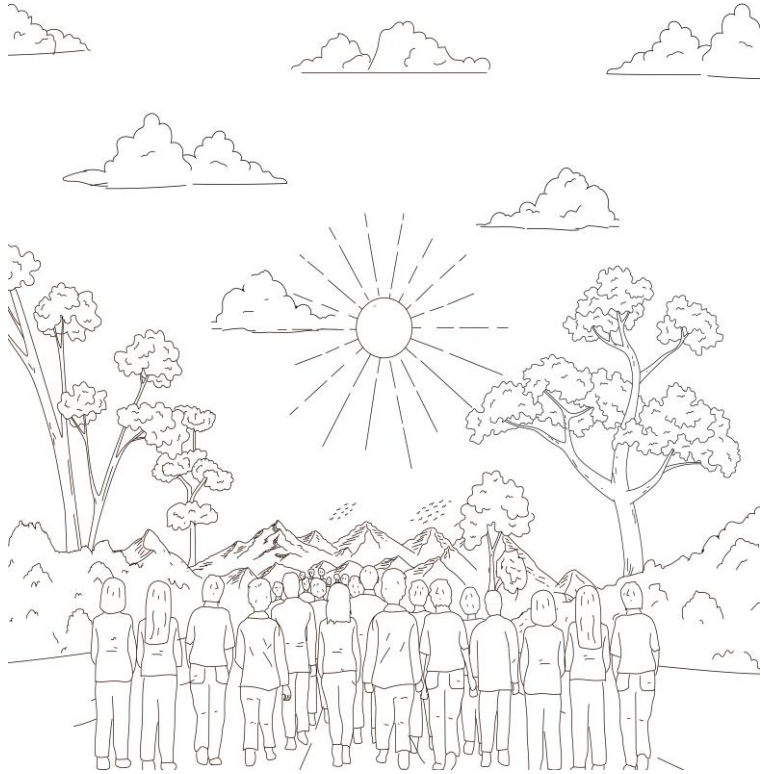
The Road offers companionship. I've had some great friends, and we traveled together until the ebb and flow of the people separated us.

The Road is full of people traveling in the same direction. The mass of humanity is like a stream. Sometimes, it is slow and calm, and sometimes there are rapids. Everybody bunches together periodically; other times, there's breathing space between groups or individuals.



Most folks treat each other well except when someone falls. The human river cannot stop. Standing against the flow of humanity to help someone up is difficult and dangerous. The odds of the Good Samaritan also being trampled are high. I'm fortunate that Fingal grabbed me.

I've often wondered about the Road. *Who made it?* You can see a long way. It is as straight as an arrow. Trees or thickets obscure what lies beyond the edges, and Mountains soar above each side. Sometimes, there would be a break between the trunks, and I could peer beyond the Road for a moment before the mass of humanity pushed me on.



My eyes were drawn to the Mountains. But I thought only an idiot would leave the comfort and relative safety of the Road. I've seen a few people strike off into the tangle of bushes. Once in a while, I'd spot small groups high up in the Mountains, which looked impossible to climb. Still, I wondered what's up there.

I turned to my companion. “Fingal, what’s in the Wilds and the Mountains that line the Road?”

“I don’t know, Laddie. Some say there are animals that eat ya, and others say monsters live in it. I don’t understand the attraction to go and find out.”

His answer didn’t quench my curiosity. I sidled towards the green wall along the edge of the Road. *What lies beyond?* I reached for the delicate leaves when a hand knocked my arm down.



“What are ya doing, Laddie? Some say it’s death to touch those leaves. Why take the chance?”

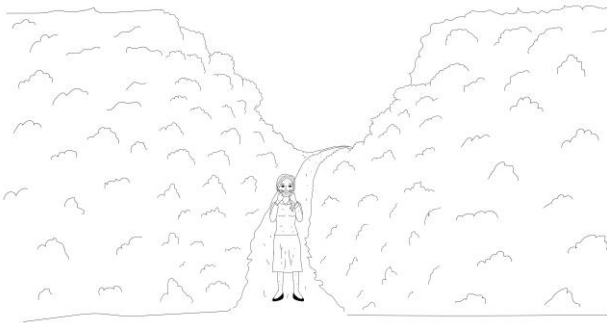
“I don’t know. It’s strange, the Mountains, the Wilds, they call to me.”

“Come on, we best be movin’ or be trampled.”

I kept glancing sideways at the thicket along the Road and the Mountains that rose beyond. Fingal's right: it's stupid to leave the ease of the Road.

A few days later, I spied someone by the edge of the Road. *Is that a break in the thicket?* A woman called to the passing crowd. As we approached, her voice got louder.

“At the end of the Road is Destruction and pain! Leave it while you can! There's life in the Wilds! Come join me. Save yourselves.”



“Fingal, what do you make of her?”

“Nut job. I've seen quite a few. Standing, sitting, or darting into the Road, trying to grab or convince you to run off into the Wild with them. Claimin' Destruction, whatever that is, is at the Road's end.”

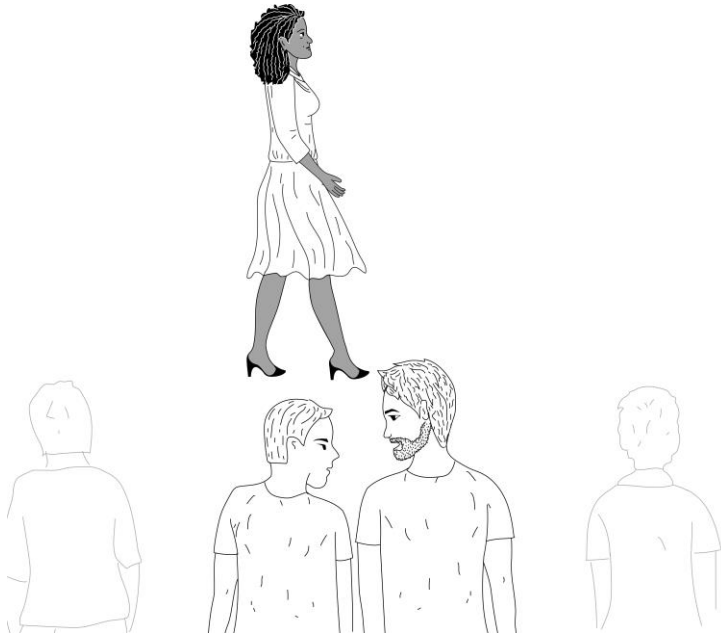
“Could they be right?”

“Laddie, the Road is way easier than the Wilds. It seems you'd be swallowed up out there faster than here. Besides, who'd put Destruction at the end of the Road? Makes no sense.”

The woman's voice faded as we passed. I stole one last look over my shoulder. She had a hold of someone's arm. The man pushed, and she fell back into the thicket. Crazy, yet I still had an itch in my brain to go to the Mountains.

Time passed, a year perhaps, and the itch in my brain lessened but never went away. My companion, Fingal, still traveled the Road with me. We had lively discussions sprinkled with laughter.

One day, Fingal said something funny. I laughed so hard that I didn't see the woman stopped in the Road.



I nearly plowed into her while she stood staring at the Mountains.

“Lady, get moving or be trampled.”

“I’m a-movin’; I’m a-movin.’ But man, look at the Mountains. I can hear them calling me. I wonder what’s up there.”

“I don’t know. The Mountains have called me, too. Thankfully, their cry is faint when I focus on the Road.”