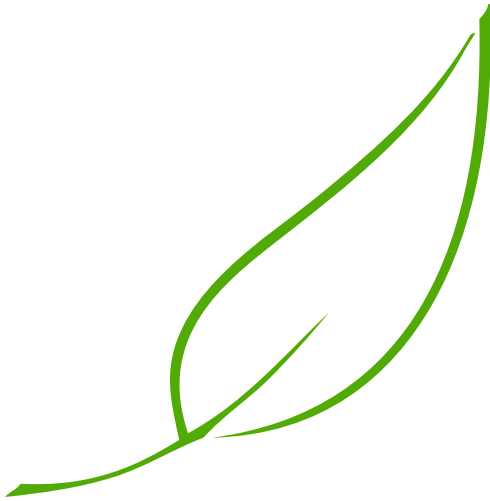


JUST CUZ

by Ken Bradbury



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Kim: *(a rough & tumble, gregarious gal, full of life)* Hi!

Meg: *(reserved to the point of brusque)* I beg your pardon?

Kim: You Margaret?

Meg: Meg. You may call me Meg.

Kim: *(extends her hand)* I'm your cousin Kim.

Meg: *(looks at the hand a moment)*

Kim: *(looks at her hand then quickly wipes in on her shirt)* Sorry. Fried chicken. You gotta eat it with your fingers or it don't taste right. *(a painful pause as the two girls size each other up)* So ... I guess you don't live on a farm.

Meg: Hardly.

Kim: *(another pause as Meg is silent and Kim fumbles for a new tactic)* It's good to finally meet you. This is the first time the whole family got together and I'm sure glad you all could come out to the farm. A person ought to know their own cousins.

Meg: *(a long sigh, then she sits, bored)*

Kim: Wanna play or somethin'?

Meg: Play?

Kim: The barn's out back. Lots of fun stuff to do out there.

Meg: Play? In a barn? Play what?

Kim: I don't know. Hay mow's a lotta fun. You slide from nearly the top to all the way down to the tractors.

Meg: And why would I want to do a thing like that?

Kim: *(shrugs)* To get to the bottom, I guess. You ever ride a cow?

Meg: *(a one-beat pause, then)* You're serious, aren't you?

Kim: Naw. You can't be *serious* ridin' a cow. It's just plain fun.

Meg: I can hardly wait.

Kim: Great! Let's go!

Meg: Wait a minute. I was just kidding. I don't want to do any of those things.

Kim: OK. Maybe you're more of a hog girl. Wanna go see my pigs?

Meg: (*just stares at her in disbelief*)

Kim: Water? You like water?

Meg: We just ate.

Kim: I mean pond water. Wanna go fishin'? I got worms in the refrigerator. Wouldn't even have to dig 'em. I keep 'em right beside the butter. Keeps 'em tender. You ain't a fisherman? Frogs then? I got two giggin' sticks hid down by the pond.

Meg: Giggin' sticks?

Kim: Pointy little sticks. You sneak up on a bullfrog and shine a light in his eyes then just when he's starin' at ya, splat! You gig him right between the eyes!

Meg: (*standing*) You're awful!

Kim: No, I ain't. I'm the best shot in the family.

Meg: I wonder when we're leaving.

Kim: You just got here this morning.

Meg: Was it this morning? I could have sworn it was last week.

Kim: We got some baby lambs. Wanna go seem 'em? Or maybe just take a walk through the pasture. There's some cool stuff out there if you look.. Or look! I know! I got a three-wheeler and we could drive all the way back to the timber where I got the neatest tree house you've ever seen, and then we could ...

Meg: (*exploding*) I don't want to slide down your tractors, I don't want see your pigs or your lambs or murder frogs. I'm doing this as a favor to my father and the sooner I can get it over with the better. I hate being here, I can't wait to get back into our car and go home. I don't want to play any of your

farm girl games. I just want to sit here until it's all over. Please! Just leave me alone!

Kim: *(a very long pause, Kim's feelings are hurt...but after a bit, the spunk returns)* Ever wrestle a hog?

Meg: Ohhh!

Kim: Sorry. I knew you didn't. Just teasin'.
(pause...Meg is beyond responsive) I said I was just teasin'. Don't you ever tease? I spect there's things you do in the city that would scare me too.

Meg: I'm not afraid of those things. I just don't want to do them.

Kim: *(a long beat, then)* That include chasin' chickens?

Meg: Ohhh!

Kim: Kiddin'! We ain't even got a chicken on the place. 'Cept maybe one.

Meg: What are you trying to say?

Kim: I think you're scared of havin' fun.

Meg: That's ridiculous. Those things are not fun to me.

Kim: Like you've tried.

Meg: Believe me, I can envision it.

Kim: OK. In case you ain't noticed, I ain't easily put off. What is fun for you, Meg?

Meg: I ... *(flustered)* ... I don't know. I ... I haven't really thought about it.

Kim: Good grief. That is awful.

Meg: I ... I enjoy myself sometimes. It's just that I don't purposely go out and ...

Kim: ... and have fun?

Meg: Well ... no. I guess not. Ever since ...*(but she stops short)*

Kim: What?

Meg: Never mind. I wonder they're doing in the house?
(she begins to leave)

Kim: Ever since the divorce?

Meg: What?

Kim: You never had any fun since your parents divorced?

Meg: Is there anything too private for you to ask about?



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