



The One with the Scraggly Beard

Elizabeth Withey • Illustrated by Lynn Scurfield
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ABOUT THE CREATORS

Elizabeth Withey is a journalist, author and visual artist. She grew up in rural Saskatchewan, reading books borrowed from the Wapiti Regional Library. A former Writer in Residence at Edmonton Public Library and staff writer and columnist at the Edmonton Journal, Elizabeth is now a producer for CBC Radio and lives in Calgary. *The One with the Scraggly Beard* was inspired by Withey's son's experience meeting his uncle, who has been living on the street since 2015.

Lynn Scurfield is a freelance illustrator from a quiet suburb outside of Toronto. She received her bachelor of illustration from Sheridan College in 2015 and has been drawing for a variety of clients ever since, including Macmillan Publishers and NPR. Her work has also been commissioned by publications such as the *New York Times*, *The Walrus* and *Reader's Digest Canada*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean when someone is homeless?
2. Have you seen people who are experiencing homelessness before?
3. What are some ways that the man with the scraggly beard and the child are similar? What are some ways that they are different?
4. What are some similarities between you and the man with the scraggly beard?
5. What can be done to help homeless people?

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

When I was little, I wanted to be a famous singer and live in a red house. My brother Graham had a different dream. He wanted to go to outer space and live in a rocket ship.

Now I'm grown up, but I'm not a famous singer and my house isn't red—it's navy blue. And Graham doesn't live in a rocket ship. He hasn't had a proper house for a long time. Sometimes he sleeps in the forest. Sometimes he sleeps in a garage, or on a friend's couch, or under a bridge, or in a train. Often he stays awake for days and days and days.

We're different—from each other and from the grownups we imagined we would become.

When I think about my brother, I feel all the yucky feelings. I feel angry. I feel sad. I feel worried and confused and embarrassed and disappointed and afraid, and sometimes I even want to throw up. But I feel the good feelings too. I remember something wild and ridiculous Graham did, and I laugh out loud, even if I'm all by myself. I feel joyful. I feel curious. I feel lucky. I feel at home. Because home is where the love is.

What is life all about? Is it about the job you do? Or the house you live in? Nope. It's about the people you love and the people who love you no matter what.

I love my brother no matter what.

—Elizabeth Withey



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