

Back then, the Meadowlands playground was paradise. The sweet, sweet smell of freshly cut grass filled my lungs with every deep breath | took. The sagging, worn blue ropes were anchored to the delicate grassy car and strung up the unimaginably tall mast of a playground platform, daring the next courageous sea-dog to overcome it. Snaking vines of every shade of green were strung together, forming a rope ladder, where we, 1 pirates, walked the plank to the enemy ship, where the fantasies of gold and superiority came true. The imperfections were perfect. Ecstasy and gunfire silenced the squeaky, un-lubricated flying fox. It silenced the creaks and cracks of the enemy ship's escape path - the jagged yellow slide, heated to a sweltering temperature by the blazing sun, leading to the churning waters. It silenced the rusty screech of the human catapult - the swing - as it groaned under the burdensome weight of too many plunderers fighting for fame a fortune. And despite this, it was perfect. Every battle-scar on my body is a tale from the raging seas to the drunken fights, and my body craves more. Minutes whiz past the battered watch, precariously balanced and engulfing my wrist from my mum. The arms tick past six. | know the consequences, but | can't abandon my crew. It's too perfect.

But now, dragging my feet through the “re-imagined” same-old playground, | struggle to imagine. Everywher: look, | see the wreck and remains of the glorious ship that once conquered the high seas. The grass is cut w