Mark Kardash

Professor Arvesen:

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Who Am I?: Lessons Learned Through Imagination

I have always been a dreamer. Whether it came to treasure hunting attempts, plans on finding lost cities and sunken vessels, or wishing to travel to mysterious lands. In my imagination, I was always on the move: On a plane, on a train, on a ship. Anywhere but home. Most people in my life supported this. The few people attempting to bring me “down to Earth” failed miserably, as I was never grounded into reality. Needless to say that one of the people trying to “wake me up” was a woman who knew nothing about me, and only annoyed me by her remarks on how I was “talking nonsense”.

In around 2008, I went to Crimea with my grandmother, having watched a film about a giant squid several months before that. One day, on the beach in Crimea, I noticed something very curious: A transparent object, with three separate sections was floating near me. It had two dots on it. My imagination turned the three sections into tentacles, and the dots into eyes. I informed grandma that I had seen a giant squid.

Grandma, of course, understood right away where it all came from, having watched the film with me. Playing along, she said we should capture it, even suggesting how. Dreaming once again, I actively imagined our mission: A battle of the ages, with slamming tentacles, ships pulled down, and scuba diving assaults. I knew grandma was not taking me seriously, even after she asked me to write a whole essay about it, teasing the “upcoming” operation with stories and arts-and-crafts projects. Before our return, she told me we would catch it next time, and we threw a coin into a local fountain for luck.

Today, I finally realize *why* I made myself believe it was a squid. Being born with cerebral palsy has rendered me unable to go to many places that others visit. I yearn for adventure, wanting to explore the extraordinary and mysterious. It is that inner feeling that made me see a monster that day, giving me a reason to go on an adventure. I learned how I want people to see me: A dreamer with a passion for the unknown. And even though that adventure never happened outside of my mind, it taught me a lot about who I am, motivating the dreaming 8-year-old boy within me to go on a real adventure someday.