

THE BARTON SERIES

TRUST BARTON



BY

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{Ages 8 and over}

TRUST BARTON

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THE PENSIVE HEROES

Barton and Dane sat quietly on a shaky, wooden bench. It was in dire need of repair and threatened to collapse under their combined weight. For some peculiar reason neither boy, usually cautious in such circumstances, seemed to care. The two close friends had just eaten lunch, but again, neither seemed to have their usual appetite. Eating, sharing, and enjoying lunch between them and their other friends was an activity in which they would generally indulge, and so with much vigour and great enthusiasm. It was obvious that the two had much on their mind, and though, little was said to their friends who sat nearby, their uneasiness was as clear as the reason was unclear.



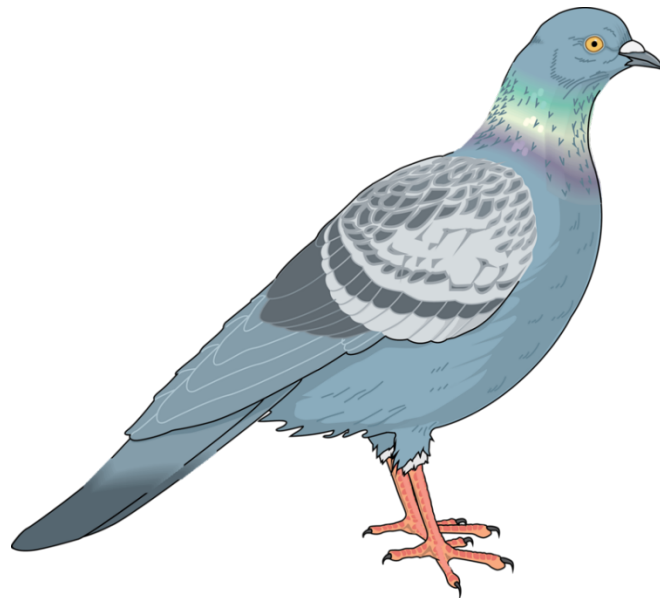
Kwame closed his eyes and feigned a peaceful slumber on another bench, positioned adjacent to that of his two close friends.

Just a few minutes before, he was offered a sandwich each, by both Barton and Dane. It was a gift that he had graciously accepted, surprising no one with the deed. Refusal of food and Kwame usually never existed in the same sentence.

“I detest seeing or knowing good food being wasted,” he whispered to Sian, and Shanna, who sat on another bench, opposite the boys. “Waste not, want not, Mom and Dad always say to me,” he said with a smile.

“Your ‘wasting not’ is quickly expanding your waist,” said the taller of the two girls.

They looked at Kwame and laughed, stretching over and poking him at the sides and drawing reference to his bursting seams. They even pretended to take the sandwiches away from him and feed the pigeons that usually descended in droves upon the schoolyard during the lunchtime interval.



Kwame ignored their jest, holding tightly to his gift of food. He pretended to look fiercely at the female invaders, who reciprocated by pretending to become afraid, sinking back to their seats. Among the members of the group there were always friendly feuds of this kind, none of which bore any ill wind behind them.

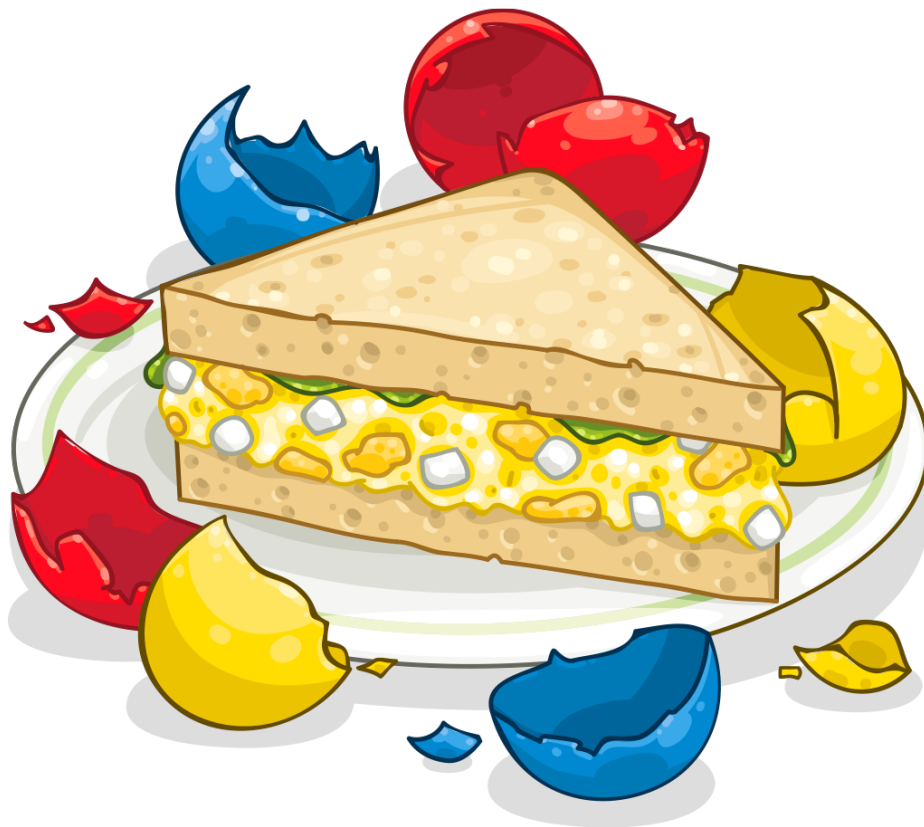
Malaika and Alfredo looked at the rather plump Kwame sympathetically. Then they too pretended to scold him, walking around him, gesturing menacingly. He, in turn, looked sheepish at them, but in the end, their antics were largely ignored in preference to the policy of Kwame’s insistence of ‘wasting not’.

“You are supposed to be on a diet,” said Malaika, fiercely.

“It is both Dane and Barton, who placed you on one, and yet they are the ones who are over-feeding you,” she almost shouted, glancing menacingly at the two oddly quiet boys.

Barton and Dane seemed largely oblivious to the goings-on around them. Even Malaika’s stabbing glances directed to Dane and then to Barton were ineffective as the boys remained lost in another world.

Kwame crunched happily on an egg and tomato sandwich, savouring the taste and smacking his lips in the pleasurable act.



“Express my thanks to the makers of these sandwiches,” he uttered between bites.

Despite his grave concern for the odd display of silence by Dane and Barton, there was not much that would take precedence over Kwame and a dainty morsel of food.

“What is the matter with you two?” asked Alfredo, not one who harboured the gift of subtlety or great patience.

“Didn’t you both have a wonderful soccer game yesterday,” asked Sian, not expecting an answer, for the performances of the boys on the day before was a talking point all over the school.

“You two are heroes at the school,” said Shanna. “You should be smiling from ear to ear instead of looking glum and worried,” she added, standing and pointing to both boys.

Then, Shanna placed her hands on her hips, much like a disappointed mother scolding her off-springs.

“Speak with your friends,” mumbled Kwame, finishing off the last morsel and looking directly at Dane and Barton. “You have my undivided attention as well as the benefit of my great wisdom,” he added, much to the amusement of the others.

Malaika meanwhile, had squeezed between the two boys and in a gesture, associated with their close friendship, placed her arms around them.

“Look here you two,” she said. “I shall have none of this. Speak or forever hold your tongue.”

All except Barton and Dane laughed. Still, the boys eventually gave a faint smile. They had been heroes on the day before and the entire school population practically worshipped them that morning. However, if anyone looked at them now, it would hardly have seemed likely that such accolades were recently placed on them and were still pouring in.

Barton budged slightly, then bent over and looked at Dane. Dane, in turn, looked at his close, dear and trusted friends who sat around him. He opened his mouth as if to speak, but no words flowed. Then he got up and slowly walked off a few metres away. Barton got up as if to follow, but then sat down again, his eyes meanwhile, focused eagle-like upon his bosom-buddy.

“This is getting curiozier and curiozier,” moaned Malaika, quoting a line from the classic of Alice in Wonderland.

Dane slowly inched his way back to the seated six.

“Maybe both Barton and I will relate a tale of intrigue which we both experienced yesterday,” he said, speaking softly and with facial contours, devoid of emotion.

Barton stood up and placed his hand around the shoulders of his friend and he nodded.

The day before had been a rather exciting one, for both boys. There were four schools in the surrounding county where they lived. Periodically, these four institutions engaged in various sports and other keenly contested competitions amongst themselves. Cricket, athletics, debating, chess, and essay writing, were all high among the list of the popular ones. However, soccer ranked at the top, at least concerning the sports department. Many members of the local community, teachers and parents would often forego other planned activities to attend the matches. It was mainly for this reason, that the fame of Dane and Barton was sculpted.



..... to be continued (See full text)