

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®



THE RISE AND FALL OF THE
KIDSBORIAN
EMPIRE

by Marshal Younger

from *Adventures in Odyssey*®



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The Rise and Fall of the Kidsborian Empire
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Summary: When two boys make up a fake lawsuit, Kidsboro's economy goes into a tailspin, and Ryan must live with the fear that a new boy will reveal a dangerous secret from his past.

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*For Bryn, my firstborn.
The day you were born, the day you were baptized,
and the day you first spelled "photosynthesis" backward,
are still three of the best days of my life.
Thanks for giving those to me.*





THE MAD AND THE GLAD

SNAP! MAX BROKE THE STICK he was holding. I glanced at him, and he looked at me with narrowed eyes and clenched fists. I couldn't help but smile, and this made him even madder. He glared at me one more time, and then left the crowd to go mourn the end of his reign as the most powerful man in Kidsboro, a community run by kids in Odyssey. Five of us had started Kidsboro months ago and our population had grown. We'd built clubhouses and small businesses in the woods behind Whit's End, an ice cream shop and discovery emporium owned by Mr. John Avery Whittaker, or "Whit" as most adults called him. And I, Ryan Cummings, was the mayor of Kidsboro.

Mark continued his presentation, pulling out a pocket-knife and cutting a window out of the tarp. The crowd around him watched with undivided attention. I was the only one who noticed Max leave. I had to follow him. I couldn't help it. I would enjoy seeing him squirm.

Max was forever tricking people out of their money. He always had at least three schemes going at one time. I

couldn't understand how he was able to keep up with all of the lies he told.

Because his father owned a construction company, Max had a practically unlimited supply of scrap wood, which he sold to Kidsboro citizens for high prices. Of course, he was paid in Kidsboro money: starbills and tokens.

Max was not only the richest citizen in Kidsboro, he was also the most powerful. No matter how many schemes he pulled, I could never get the city council to kick him out because we needed wood. He could get away with pretty much anything.

But now . . . O glorious day! Now, we had just voted in a new citizen: Mark. His father worked at an awning company. At this very moment, he was showing us how to make the walls of our clubhouses out of plastic tarp instead of wood. Tarp had a lot of advantages over wood. First, there were no cracks that people could see through. Second, it was better for keeping the weather out. Third, it was easier and cheaper to build with.

People loved the idea. If everyone decided to go with the tarp, then we wouldn't need wood anymore and Max would be out of business. Plus, if he tried another one of his schemes and we found out, no one would hesitate to kick him out. At last I could be free of Max.

I caught up to him. "So, Max . . . what do you think about this tarp idea?"

"Go away, Ryan."

"Looks like you may actually have to make an *honest* buck for once."

He stopped suddenly and pointed in my face. “Do you really think I care diddly squat about this tarp guy?”

“It looked like you cared when you demolished that stick back there.”

“Let’s just keep one thing in mind, partner. The thing that makes me the most powerful man in Kidsboro ain’t the wood. It’s the fact that I’m 10 times smarter than any of you. This tarp thing is a bump in the road. I’ll be back. I’ll own this whole place. And when I do . . . you’ll be the first person I crush.”

He took off toward his home and I didn’t follow. I knew he would live up to those words. I was in for a war.