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Welcome To The Wonderland

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A carousel of caricature cars spun, subduing children-drivers into a carefree trance. Happy, they cachinnated and squealed, adding vocals to the repetitive circus music, creating a bizarre and at times uncanny cacaphony. Around the carousel, the kids' parents huddled, blissfully watching how their children in toy cars ran in circles, waiting for the ride to the finish so they could visit the rest of the fair until the day's end. Some were smiling and waving their kids when they drifted by on yet another lap, chatting, drinking beer, or pecking their phones. This carousel was just a microcosm of the whole wonderland, a vast area in the park, filled with laughter and screams, street food and ice cream. The carousel stopped and the effervescent offsprings united with their parents, some asked for one more round, others, cognizant of other adventures available, dragged their parents wither their next destination: another cartoonish carousel, a polished slide, a kiosk of candyfloss clouds which beguilingly floated around, a creepy clown show.

Another group of kids queued up for the caricature cars and, when their time came, entered the carousel and started choosing vehicles for their ride: common cars of a variety of colours, some acid pink barbie car, a limo, a firefighter car, a police car, an ambulance car, and a tank with a

comically short gun. Sprawled out to the sides, they all took their seats, some cried when their favourite vehicles were taken, some tried to negotiate an exchange. One of them, a little rosy-cheeked boy, climbed into that acid pink barbie car, and smiling with all fewness of his teeth, lounged there imposingly and waved to his mother who stood near the carousel, smiling back.

Before the circular race started, the boy's father, a frowning middle-aged man with two ice cream cones, entered the scene and clumsily slipped the cones into his wife's hands. He climbed into the carousel, stepping over the little fence, and approached his boy. 'Boys don't drive that!' he grunted and grabbed his son by his armpits, pulled him out of the barbie car and transferred him to the still vacant short-gun tank nearby. He jumped off the carousel and left the wailing kid running laps in the tank while the circus motif kept playing in the background. The kid tried to leave the tank, but safety measures prevented that – he was fixed firmly until the round ended. On every lap, when the boy flew past his parents, he looked at them with his swollen eyes, sobbing, banging his little fists on the car. His mother, distressed, her dress smeared with ice cream, went to the carousel's exit waiting for it to stop, while his father stood still, scowling and hunching, devouring his cone. Drive, my son, enjoy the ride, welcome to the wonderland.

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