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<http://thewallbreakers.com/marvelous-marvins/>

## **Marvelous Marvin's**

[[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=JFp0tDY3Vqk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JFp0tDY3Vqk)]

*This is a special guest post from [Enzo Scavone](#).*

During a recent visit with my wife's family in Michigan, I was introduced to my niece-in-law, Shawna, an unconventional, lively, and outgoing preteen. At one point during the evening, she shared one of her recent adventures with me. It was an trip to a place called Marvelous Marvin's.

"Marvelous Marvin's?" I asked.

"Yes! You've never heard of it?"

"No, what is it?"

"It's this huuuge arcade. Last time we went there for three hours, but I could stay there for days."

"For days?" I laughed.

"Yeah! Seriously! You have to go there! It's AAAMAZING!"

"Ok, I might check it out."

"No seriously, you have to go! You'll have a blast!"

I smiled.

That night, as I made my way through conversations with the other family members, I frequently recalled my brief interaction with Shawna and her childish euphoria when telling me about that place. I wondered if I could feel the same. Curious, I suggested to my wife we go there before we returned to New York.

So the next day, my wife and I drove to Marvelous Marvin's in Farmington Hills. As we stepped through the entrance, I remembered Shawna's recommendation and felt giddy and ready to give myself over to amazement. Once inside, I was overwhelmed by the

cacophony of noise, lights, and movement produced by the video games and vintage mechanical oddities inhabiting the place. I was eager to take in the spectacle and expected that sense of wonder to come over me and whisk me away. However, it didn't happen. The place just didn't seem as fascinating as Shawna had described. I walked through the aisles and recalled Shawna's expression that was supposed to capture the essence of this place: "AAAMAZING!" Where would I see those three capital A's and that exclamation point that had sent Shawna into such a frenzy? After I passed what seemed the hundredth machine announcing a jackpot, I sadly realized that this place is not such a big deal to me.

What was it that she had experienced but was ungraspable to me now? It probably had something to do with our age difference. As a child you come to a place like Marvelous Marvin's by the grace of your parents. That means that they drive you there and you can only stay as long as they allow—which is usually as short as possible. In addition, you only have as much money as they give you to play the machines—which no matter how much, to a child, is just never enough. As a child you experience time and money as scarce resources in the face of game opportunities that scream at you with ever so easily obtainable prizes ("WIN! WIN! WIN!"). With the limited resources pressing you and the abundance of stimuli enthralling you, you want to believe the promise of the jackpot because it offers so much more than the reality of an SUV-ride with your siblings and a cup of quarters. So, you fall into a gaming frenzy that completely enraptures you and you escape into its bliss.

As an adult, however, you can stay as long as you wish. You can also spend as much money as you want. There is no pressure from limited resources and thus, the prizes don't seem to offer so much more than you already have—you don't feel motivated to chase after them and the excitement is low.

Pondering these thoughts, I paced around the aisles in between the machines and stopped at the little kiosk where children could exchange the tokens they won at the arcade games for cheap goodies. Stale chewing-gum? Car-shaped eraser? Alien push-toy? Meh. Where are good prizes like iPads... or real cars, or that "pay off your mortgage" coupon?—and suddenly through the noise of the jackpots and blinking lights it dawned on me. Just like I am a bored grown-up visitor in Shawna's world, a world that feels like being alive to her,

there might be someone who sees my world and is not impressed at all, wondering what I see in it.

My grown-up world is a place where I feel I don't have enough time to do the things I want to do. I also feel I never have enough money to experience my life completely. I face limited resources and I feel pressured because everything tells me that with a little more effort I will hit the jackpot (BEING PERFECTLY IN SHAPE! GETTING PROMOTED! HAVING A GREAT BUSINESS IDEA!). So, tirelessly, I chase after my jackpots without time to think about what I am doing or what they actually are.

Shawna will get older and leave her childish world like we all do more or less. But we grown-ups, who go to the gym every day, who go above and beyond at a mediocre job, or who have great ideas for a business, will we ever leave our arcade and leave the perpetual need and its numbing stupor? Maybe... but unfortunately I have no time to think about it now. Got to be rested for work tomorrow and finish that project that will finally prove to my boss that I'm due for a promotion

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*Editor's Note: I found this essay by Enzo to be particularly interesting. It raised a lot of questions. Below is an email exchange we had after he submitted the essay to me. I'm including this because I feel that they do a good job showing Enzo's frame of mind and his way of thinking, something that is important given the overall sentiment of the essay he wrote:*

### **My email to Enzo:**

I found this piece to be really interesting. Do you feel like you ended it on too "negative" a note? Or would you say you are just being realistic? I agree with your sentiment and how you feel. Often-times I feel that way myself. I however, perhaps to the detriment of my own happiness, tend to feel that I absolutely **can** change the pressures of adulthood that you mention. I feel like if I gave in to "well this is just how life is" I'd become a hopeless person who'd do whatever he wanted because none of it would matter. I think it's perhaps the hope of something greater to be achieved in life that keeps us having a moral code. Maybe it's all b.s. though, after all death is just a doorway that we can't see the other side of 😊 .

I think this actually brings up a larger conversation I've been looking to have with my audience about what we can do to change the way things are going for people professionally, and how perhaps we can get just a little tiny bit closer to a utopian society where at least we feel as though we're working towards a greater goal. Thoughts...?"

**Enzo's reply:**

Those are interesting thoughts. Here the answers to some of your cues:

**“Do you feel like you ended it on too “negative” a note? Or would you say you are just being realistic?”**

I agree that the ending note is rather negative. However, that was chosen consciously because I believe that realizing a negative circumstance and reflecting about it offers the possibility for improvement. Since I, the narrator, describe my “hamster wheel,” the reader (the opposite “you”) can separate from that and avoid it. I intend for the reader to reflect about it through the rhetorical question that I pose. That's what I hoped to achieve. In that sense I believe the ending to be just right.

**“...tend to feel that I absolutely CAN change the pressures of adulthood”**

Do you see how my essay does not oppose that? In fact — as stated above — it stimulates the reader (through the rhetorical question in the end) to think about how to be different than the narrator who has no time to think about how to escape the arcade. So, you picked up on the hidden appeal to consider what one really wants in life. Nice 😊

**“...perhaps we can get just a little tiny bit closer to a utopian society”**

All throughout my studies I have often encountered this sentiment. Thinkers trying to approach this final goal of an utopian state that seems like a paradise. Right now I believe this can never be reached. However, the striving to get there is a good guide on how to do things to improve the status quo. So, thinking about a utopian society still has some validity because it provides a guideline that then needs some pragmatism to make it applicable to the status quo and improve it.

So there you have it. How do you guys feel about what Enzo and I think? Comment below!

- See more at: <http://thewallbreakers.com/marvelous-marvins/#sthash.CcSwQzG5.dpuf>

