

## The Strap On Project

Mercy stepped out of the cab and bumped into someone who was trying to get in.

"Watch it, buddy," the someone said. Mercy nodded his head but didn't look the someone in the eye. He kept his head down and his hands in his pockets while he walked down the busy sidewalk. People moved out of the way for him as he made his way through, mostly because he was talking to himself.

"Forty one, forty two, almost there, forty four, forty five, forty six, nearly there, one step about sixteen inches, measured the average, fifty five, " and he continued to count and talk to himself until he got to one hundred and eleven.

"Eleventy one," he said with a smile, and allowed himself one look upward to the sign hanging over the door. It was an old style tavern sign, the kind that hangs down like a banner, only this wasn't a banner, rather a piece of wood cut to look like a ragged banner. At that, he didn't even really lift his head, just took his chin up a little from his chest and rolled his eyes upward until he caught the faintest sight of the sign. He walked around the sign, still trying hard not to lift his head up to far and straining until the muscles on his eyes threatened to sprain. He finally was able to read the sign.

He smiled even wider. This was the place. He did it pretty good, too, mapping out the co-ordinates on-line and determining how many steps, with the length of his average gait, it would take to get there and not have to actually look up. To look up would make him lose all nerve. He took his hands out of his pockets and tested his pulse. Sixty eight. Slightly above average for a man of his age and weight but to be expected. His shrink would never

believe he could have made it this far but he did. He reached deeper into the front left hand pocket of his pants and pulled out his floppy, red covered loop ringed notebook. It was kept shut with a wide rubber band that also kept his red carpenter's pencil in place. Carpenter's pencils were the best. They were the easiest to sharpen. He went to make a note when someone bumped him again.

"Hey! Watch it, Buddy. You comin or goin?" Mercy did not look at the someone, he just nodded and backed up and out of the way. When he felt the wall against his back, he breathed a sigh of relief and turned to face the wall. He could feel his pulse slow down. He went back to making a note in his book.

"Eight thirty p.m.," he wrote down. "Made it to The Bearded Taco. Time to find Mimi and her strap-on."