

Supported Rebellion

"Joe ... can you take a look at this?" the clean skinned youth asked as he handed the drawing over.

Joe looked at the sketch. It was a pen and ink of the dinosaur and was good enough to become a re-sellable flash - and be sold across the U.S.

"This isn't the same drawing you brought in last month," Joe commented as he inspected the intricacy of the impending tattoo.

"No ... you were right ... that one was so totally 80s..." his giggle turned into a laugh.

"Getting your first inking is really important," Joe repeated for the umpteenth time. "This is permanent. It is not reversible."

The boy was still smiling.

"But as he gets older ... will there be shrinkage? Will the colors fade?" the boy's mother asked. She was trying to make sure her oldest was fully educated before he made this leap.

"It will shrink and grow as he does. If the color fades... he can come on back and I will re-ink it," Joe said.

"Okay. Will you do the job?" the 18-year-old asked.

"Is it okay, mom?" Joe did not directly address the boy's question.

"It was his birthday last Wednesday, he's old enough to be legal now," she said gently with a hint of uncertainty as her son smiled at her.

"Okay. Sit. Take your shirt off. We're puttin' this on your arm ... right?" Joe confirmed as he reached for the epoxy. After the boy nodded, Joe affixed the drawing to the young man's deltoid.

As the needle pierced the skin, all of the mom's teasing ran through his mind, 'puttin' poison into your body... it won't ever come off...' he began to force positive thoughts into his mind.

He passed out. Joe stopped inking him. He helped the mother load the boy into a wheelbarrow. Her brave boy was off in dreamland.

"It will be a miracle if he comes back," his mother muttered under her breath as she steered her son out of the studio.

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