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7<sup>th</sup> Period

### **Puzzling Present**

On the morning of Kevin Farmer's 14th Christmas, Kevin woke up to the aroma of freshly baked sugar cookies and the sight of wrapped presents under the Christmas tree (Farmer interview). In his excitement, Kevin jumped around from present to present, searching for something that caught his eye. Nothing interesting jumped out at him. Kevin did not receive many presents that year, but he remained intrigued by the seasonal atmosphere. His brother, Jalen, came down stairs and joined in searching through the presents. Jalen picked up an object resembling a box. He opened the present, and Kevin saw the word "Rubik's" written across the object. This mysterious object is a cube shaped puzzle covered in colorful, square-shaped stickers (History of the Rubik's). It is called the Rubik's Cube and was created in 1974 by a professor by the name of Erno Rubik (History of the Rubik's). Erno Rubik was a professor of architecture in Hungary (History of the Rubik's). He created the object which was supposed to be impossible, because it twisted and turned without falling apart (History of the Rubik's). Jalen took his new Rubik's Cube to his room and immediately began to play with it.

Later that same day, Jalen emerged from his room for dinner. Kevin noticed Jalen had brought the cube covered in colorful squares with him. Kevin also noticed that the cube appeared to be jumbled with none of the colored squares in the correct order. Jalen seemed to be irritated and called the Rubik's Cube the "worst gift ever." Kevin inquired about why Jalen thought the present was so terrible, and his brother told him it was impossible to solve. Following dinner, Jalen threw the cube on the couch, which Kevin took as an invitation to retrieve the strange toy for himself. Jalen watched as Kevin started playing with it and decided to make a bet. He offered Kevin \$100 if he was able to solve the puzzle within a week. However, if Kevin was unable to



solve the Rubik's cube in that amount of time, he would owe Jalen \$100 dollars instead and would also have to return the toy to his brother (Farmer interview). Kevin eagerly accepted his brother's deal with the confidence to complete the task (Farmer interview).

Overwhelmed with ambition, Kevin took the Rubik's cube straight to his room, and he began playing with it non-stop. Kevin never lets anyone tell him he is not able to do something, so he kept working hard to solve the Rubik's Cube. He managed to come up with some tricks with the puzzle that allowed him to move certain pieces into a fixed place. Kevin's ability to come up with tricks on his own for solving the cube is impressive, because most people cannot solve it without help (How to Solve). Many people look up and learn the algorithms for solving the puzzle (How to Solve). In order to use the algorithms, one must first learn the notation used in the algorithms to name the sides and the directions they are rotated (How to Solve). After learning the notation, all one has to do is follow the instructions for the algorithms that work to solve the Rubik's Cube (How to Solve). Whenever Kevin messed up, he would scramble the puzzle and start solving it all over again. Constant repetition of these methods brought Kevin closer and closer to solving the puzzle every time he played with it. In just three days, Kevin had managed to memorize his methods of solving the puzzle and was overcome with feelings of success. While it took Kevin only three days to solve the Rubik's Cube, the creator, Erno Rubik, took over a month to find the solution to his own puzzle (History of the Rubik's).

The morning after solving the puzzle, Kevin gave his brother the solved Rubik's Cube. Jalen of course did not believe that Kevin had really solved it and proceeded to scramble the colored squares again. Then, Jalen returned the cube to Kevin and watched in awe as he solved it in under a minute. Kevin's accomplishment was impressive, but many others are able to solve the Rubik's Cube even faster. Some people are able to solve the puzzle in just seconds. The



world record for solving it is 4.73 seconds and is held by Feliks Zemdegs, a citizen of Australia (World Cube Association). As a result of solving the puzzle, Kevin received the \$100 dollars as promised by his brother, who was still in shock over what he just witnessed. In that moment, Kevin knew no one would ever be able to tell him he could not do something. He knew that as long as he put in the effort, training, and hard work, he could do anything. Kevin continued with this mentality and took on many challenges with ease. Going forward, whenever Kevin was presented with doubt, he used it as motivation and encouragement in completing difficult tasks in his life.

### Works Cited

- Farmer, Kevin. Personal Interview. 09 Mar. 2017
- "The History of the Rubik's Cube." *Rubik's*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Mar. 2017.
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- "World Cube Association - Official Results." *World Cube Association - Official Results*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Mar. 2017.

