

## Lesson 13

## READ THIS STORY #2, Basic

**Tony's Tattoo**

Tony hated his teachers. They said he was lazy and a troublemaker. So he began to cut his classes. He was bored, so he began to shoplift just for the excitement. To prove he was a tough guy, he joined the Red Devils gang and got several tattoos. His tattoos were not fashion statements. They were symbols of his gang connection. Later he added tattoos with coded words and numbers, and a picture of a voluptuous woman named Lulu.

As he grew older, Tony graduated to more serious crimes. He was arrested, and spent time behind bars for assault and auto theft.

While in prison, Tony realized what an idiot he had been. He no longer wanted to be a gangster. Upon his release, he wanted to create a new life. But he was afraid his tattoos would prevent him from getting a good job. He wore long sleeves to hide the tattoos on his arms, but he couldn't hide the ones on his hands. So Tony decided to have them removed.

Now once a month, on Saturday mornings, you'll find Tony at the hospital, waiting for his turn of laser treatment. He feels some pain as the laser burns the ink beneath his skin, leaving ashes behind. The doctors aren't sure the laser will completely erase his tattoos, even after several treatments. And the treatments aren't free. It costs about thirteen hundred dollars to remove an average size tattoo.

Since Tony doesn't have much money, he has agreed to do twenty-eight hours of community service work in exchange for each treatment. Tony thinks that is a bargain.