

A Perfect World

By: Elizabeth D.

Trudging along the old seaside road, my right hand crumpled a slip of paper from school I got earlier that day. The scenes replayed in my head like a broken record, I was briskly walking down the hallway eager to leave the prison they call school and collided with another kid, since he was a small gy, he fell , , , hard. I was frozen, notable to say a word as the principal bustled toward us. The kid quickly told the principal I shoved him. Guessing the kid had teacher's pet status, because the principal replied, "Alex, when you go home give this to your parents." It was a detention notice.

Like it mattered, my parents cared more about Trey, my older brother, He was smart, strong, charming, the perfect son. Because of him, I often walked along this road, I took a deep breath of the brisk air nipping at my nose and kept walking. Roughly kicking stones at abandoned shops lining the road, I glanced at the old "Andy's Antiques" sign distressed by decades of saltwater breezed.

I pushed the door open while the old chimes greeted me in, I threw my backpack atop an oversized desk sending dust billowing. All the usual stuff was in place: toppled chairs, shelves stacked with a gazillion dusty books and boxes of old trinkets. It wasn't much, but it was the only place where I escaped my so called life, with the crumpled slip of paper still in hand, I crammed it in my backpack.

Trying to forget it all, I grabbed some candy from my stash behind the desk. Chocolate and caramel exploded in my mouth. Taking another bite, I slumped into a chair. My eyes lingered around the room and started to drift. To the right, I saw something oddly colorful. I jolted up and headed toward the object. It was an antique metal box with an engraving on top. *Whoever Yields*. Examining it, I started talking out loud. "This wasn't here before. I know every nook and cranny of this old place, and it's too extravagant to miss!" My curiosity beckoned me to open the box...so I did. Instantly I couldn't move a muscle, as if my arms and legs were glued together while my jaw was clamped shut. There was a burst of frigid air causing countless goose bumps to form up and down my arms. Trying to calm down, I concentrated on breathing through my nostrils since my mouth wasn't cooperating.

Turning pitch black, it sounded like a roaring river engulfed the room. I felt utterly helpless as I next saw a blinding light coming at me like a train, I strained to stay away but nothing worked. It was headed straight for me. I closed my eyes because the blinding effect was painful. Then it was over. I nervously peered around and was astonished. I was back at school and head a familiar voice say, "Oh sorry. You

okay?" It was the teacher's pet. "Yeah" I replied. "but didn't I bump into you?" He said "Not at all. I wasn't looking where I was going. Let me help you." He stuck out his hand and hoisted em up. "Sorry." He said "but I'm late for the bus, bye!" And he hurried off.

I stood there speechless trying to reconcile it all. For a brief moment I didn't care. I was just happy to move my arms and legs again. I pushed opened the door to the outside and began walking my usual route home. Would the rest of the afternoon be as twisted as what I just experienced? Stepping onto the crosswalk, I heard my brother's voice shout "Hey! Where're you going? You know I pick you up every day!" I was stunned. My actual brother would *never* do that. It seemed as if I landed in some parallel world. Did I? I chose my words carefully "Oh, right. Sorry! I forgot!" This is where I expected Trey to get mad but he wasn't. "It's okay," he responded. "Everyone forgets one in a while!" I gave him a grin and hopped onto the front seat. "I take it you had a good day at school?" he asked. "Yeah, awesome" I replied, still grinning.

The rest of the day was a blur. Dad and mom were super attentive, I felt just as loved as my brother. So far world seemed really amazing. Day by day, it was perfectly routine...breakfast, school, home, dinner, bed. Everything was so ultra nice it began to alarm me. One day I took a bike ride to the old antique shop, but it wasn't there. Instead, there was just a dirt road with a lighthouse and blacksmith shop. I was so discouraged that I chucked my helmet to the ground. That's when Trey pulled up in his pickup truck and asked why I was there.

I told Trey everything. Though he didn't believe me, he was curious. Trey tossed me a plain brown package with my name on it. He said it was in his truck that morning and didn't know where it came from. I ripped it open to find a key and a slip of paper with one word on it. *Think*. Looking around, I saw the Blacksmith shop and remembered the antique metal box, I ran to the shop with Trey following only to find the door locked. I tried the key from the package, it worked. Walking in, it was dimly lit with low ceilings and dirt floors.

As my eyes adjusted, I saw a myriad of metals and tools piled high spilling over countertops and tables. "Watch your step." I muttered to trey. That's when I saw it, the box. I ran over to it as fast and cautiously as I could. Once I got to it, I immediately opened it. There was a note that read – *To get back home, you must restore the place you have come.*"How am I supposed to do that?" I shouted.