

"Mom, I'm going out on my route. Be back around eight." I thought it was a normal day. Then again I hadn't really been out yet. I usually spent most of my summer getting a head start on next year's reading list, but I got around town before sticking my head into a book.

"Okay, see you then," Mom yelled.

My mom was short for her age with blond hair, and blue eyes. She always wore a suit. She left early every morning and never got home until late at night. My mother never really went out with friends anymore, ever since my father passed away. I missed the old happy times, when I could truly talk to her. Now all she did was bury herself in work.

My usual route started on Fifth Maple Street. It was a long walk to the library, but on a warm summer day in California, I enjoyed it. The street smelled of flowers. Not many people were out yet. Beautiful colors were everywhere. I stopped by the cafe to pickup a coffee and doughnut, which usually got me going in the morning.

"Hi, Venus, what can I get for you today?"

"The usual."

As I walked into the library the smell of old books filled my nose. There were old bookshelves overflowing with millions of books. I sat down in my usual corner, near the window, so that I could feel the draft. The library was always a little stuffy.

"No, no, no, read it," I murmured to myself. I looked from shelf to shelf looking for a new book to stick my head in. Looking for a new book was always hard for me. Since I spent my whole summer vacation inside the local library, I had read every book in the library including the encyclopedias. Today I walked by the fantasy section. "Read it," I said to myself, but something caught my eye.

I walked over to the book that had caught my eye. It was hanging off the shelf, so that if a person touched it, it would fall right off. When I picked the book off the shelf, I was surprised. I had not seen it before, yet it was not the book that surprised me, but what was behind the book.

Behind the shelf there was a little compartment, but there was no door. The shelf was just extended a little. I pulled the book off of the shelf. I flipped some of the pages

to see what the book was like. The book was so old that the pages were stained orange. There was a musky smell. The text was odd; it was probably Old English. Some of the words I'm not even sure were English. I went to the front desk to check the book out. This would be a great book to show my grandfather. When I got to the front desk, nobody was there. After I waited a few minutes, someone came. I swiped my card.

"Hi Venus," said the librarian.

"Hello." I handed the book to the librarian.

"That's weird. It says here on the computer that this book does not belong to the library."

"May I just borrow it then and bring it back tomorrow?"

"That would be fine." When I was back in my seat, I opened the book. The draft from the window blew the pages all over the place. I tried to read bits and pieces, but I couldn't understand any of it.

I closed the window. My mind went crazy. I closed my eyes. Next thing I knew, I wasn't in the library! There were loud noises all over the place. I could hear the wind in the distance. People were dressed strangely. I thought everybody was staring at me. I didn't think I was still Sacramento, California. For a second I thought I was in the past. How could that be possible? My mind went blank.

I started to walk around. I thought I was at some kind of market. There were apples and pears out, not much of anything else. There was one boy about my age. He was working at one of the stands. I walked up to him.

"Can I ask you where we are, and what year is it?"

"Well, of course we're in California in 1933."

"Can you help me with something, It's urgent!"

"I'm working now, but I can help you in an hour." I waited around his stand. I started to pace back and fourth. The guy at the stand looked at me like I was odd. Everyone who came up knew who he was. He had strong arms and a tall figure. If it weren't for his face, he would look like a grown man. I wondered why he was working at this age. Where were his parents?

When it had felt like forever, he left his stand. We started to walk. I just followed him. I did not know where I was going. We finally stopped at a worn down house, but it was more like an apartment on one level.

"My parents won't be home till dawn," he said. I hesitated to go in. When I realized I had no other choice, I went in.

"Before I ask you any more questions, what is your name?"

"That would be Will, and yours?"

"I am Venus."

"Now about those questions you wanted to ask me," Will said.

"They are not exactly questions." I explained to Will how I found the book and how I ended up here. He looked willing to help me.

"So, let's find the book!" Will exclaimed.

"If the book got you here, it can surely get you back." I had never really thought about finding the book. I guess I never realized I didn't have the book.

"It's too late to look for it now. We will go out in the morning and look for it," Will said snapping me back to reality.

I couldn't sleep in the house. It was smaller than what I was use to. There were two small cots. I laid on one of them because Will's parents never ended up coming home. The house smelled of burnt wood. I think it was because of the fireplace. There were only a chair and a table besides the cots. There was no other furniture.

When I woke up the next morning, Will was dressed and waiting. I had no clothes, so Will gave me a shirt to borrow. It was more like a dress. For breakfast we ate eggs and biscuits.

When we got outside, Will asked me many questions like, "Where were you" and "what were you thinking when all this happened?" Some of the questions I couldn't answer. I couldn't tell Will places where it could be because he wouldn't know them. All I knew was that I would not be home any time soon. I did learn one thing though. Will said that there were not a lot of books around town, so if we saw one it would probably be the one we were looking for.

By noon we still hadn't found anything. We were getting hungry. Will packed bread and apples, so we sat down and ate. Will drew a picture of the town in the sand. I told him around where I thought the library would be, but I wasn't even sure if I was remotely correct.

"Will, we will never find the book. There's no use I will be stuck in this time forever." I thought about how I would never play on my laptop again or see my mom. I wished I had never found that stupid library book. Will went on and talked, but I didn't really listen.

I tried to think hard of what the book had said, but that time was becoming a blur. I couldn't really remember any of it.

"Venus!" Will yelled.

"What?"

"I have been calling your name forever. Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine."

"I think we should start heading back to my house. We will look again later." By the time we got back to Will's house, it was time to eat dinner. Will cooked ham over the fire. I had never really eaten ham that was not from a restaurant. Again, Will's parents never ended up coming home, so I took their cot. During the night before I went to sleep it was so dark that I couldn't see anything, and it was also very quiet like no one was there.

When I awoke in the morning, Will wasn't there. I thought he had gone out to work at his stand. There was a note on his cot. The note read:

Thank you Venus for all your help in finding the book. You were right about where the library was. I found the book in its place. I hope you don't mind, but the future sounded so cool. I decide to take the book and go myself.

Sincerely,

Will

"What!" How could he do this to me? I thought he was trying to help me. This sure backfired I thought. Now I will never see anybody I know again. How am I

supposed to survive? I don't know how to hunt, and how am I supposed to chop down firewood.

Maybe I can still catch him. I tried to remember the map that Will drew. When I thought I knew where the library was, I ran as fast as I could. When I got there, I didn't see anybody. Then out of nowhere Will himself appeared.

"Why are you here?" I asked Will.

"Whenever I tried to go to the future, I couldn't enter."

"Why would you steal the book from me?"

"Did you read my note? It was all there." I was really angry now. I still couldn't believe that he would just steal the book from me. My face was redder than a fire truck. When I saw the book, I snatched it right out of his hand and started to read it. My head started to hurt, my eyes closed, and next thing I knew I was back in the library. I quickly dropped the book on the desk and ran off. When I got home, I went to my room and looked at my laptop. I hugged my stuffed animal that I have had since I was three. I had never been so happy to walk into my house in my life. I told myself that I would never again take a book out of a secret compartment.

The whole time that I had been in the past felt so unreal now. Maybe tomorrow I won't take my usual route I think I'll just sleep in. That would be a lot safer.