

Whoosh!

Where am I? How did I get here? What is this place? Where are my parents? Thousands of questions start filling up my head as a woman and I walk in a hallway. The woman stops at a door that's marked: WELCOME CENTER. She opens it and pushes me through it.

"Hello! Wait, Jason, is that you?" The person at the counter is my mom. She comes out from behind it and hugs me. "That time travel was really hard on you."

I'm amazed.

"We time traveled?" I ask in a daze.

"Your father and I have been wanting to live here ever since I told him," she explains, "But you have to be eleven years old to be here. It's the law."

She hugs me again, then points down the hall. "Go straight, take a right, first door on the left." I nod, and start walking down the hall, pinching my leg to make sure I'm not dreaming.

A moment later I'm sitting in a chair. This person is talking about what life here is like.

"The schools around here are the best in the state. There's Galcia Elementary, Everstone Elementary, Alsia Middle School, Fort High School, and a few others. In fact, I went to Everstone Elementary myself as a kid.

"Here's a map. Recycle it when you're done. Hope you like it here!" Then, to the girl waiting in the doorway, he says, "Come in."

I tell my mom that I'm going home. I use the map and I get home, climb up the stairs, and somehow I know that the room upstairs to the right is mine. I open the door, and look around in amazement. It looks exactly like the room in the mortal world. My bed is in the same shape as it was in the morning. I find a pen and paper, and write a little note.

Mom, Dad,

If I'm not here when you get back, I'll either be in the park or the library.

-Jason

I tape it onto to the kitchen counter and step outside again.

On the playground people stare at me like I look like a maniac. I ignore them, and go to the swings. The girl I saw earlier is sitting on the tree right behind me. She smiles and waves. I wave back. She beckons me to join her. I climb up the tree (with a little of her help) and sit down next to her. A boy mouths, "*Jason and Emma, sitting in a tree.*" The girl scowls at him, and his gang howls with laughter. She sticks her hand out to me, and says, "Hi, Jason. I'm Emma."

"How in the world do you know my name?"

"Whenever a new person comes, their name shoots through everyone's minds. It's cool."

"Oh. Are there any more powers this place has?"

"Everyone has a different one. I can talk people into doing what I want them to do."

"Does anyone control wind?"

"Not anyone I know of. You try."

I relax and clear my mind of everything. I imagine the boy and his gang smashing into the tree behind them because of a gust of wind, and there's this whooshing noise, and the boys collide. Emma's clapping right now. I look at my watch, and tell her I have to go. I climb down the tree and run home.

My dad is home by the time I get back. He says, "Hi." I nod back and grab a popsicle from the fridge. I lick it. After I'm done I tell Dad I'm going to the library. He nods, then goes back to his newspaper.

The library is really big and there are tons of shelves. I look around and find a book. It's called *Things Not Seen*. I check it out and take a walk around town. I see Everstone Elementary,

and it looks just like my other school in the mortal world. I walk on and see a group of girls giggling like crazy. One sees me and says, “Hi, Jason.” I wave a little, and when I’m out of their sight I hear them laughing even harder. I shake my head. Some people are just plain weird.

Later at dinner Mom comes home from work. I ask, “Mom, what’s your power?” She looks at me straight in my eyes, and her voice pops in my head. *I can talk in everyone’s mind.* Mom looks at Dad, and he says, “My special power is that I can talk in every language.” He then says something I don’t understand, but I know it’s French. Mom shot him a look. I guess she can understand French. The rest of the dinner is silent.

When I’m in bed I feel like I don’t belong here. Most things don’t even make sense. I begin to feel scared, and it becomes colder around me. I guess my feelings also control the wind.

In the morning I stumble into the kitchen. Mom’s there. “Honey, I’ve packed your backpack. You’re going to Everstone. It’s just like your other school.” I nod, grab my backpack, and go to the bus stop.

I really don’t like waiting. So when the bus comes I run on. The hard part is to find a place to sit. I don’t know anybody there, so I sit in the back. The boys from yesterday aren’t there. I’m guessing that they either don’t go to this school or they walk or ride to school.

The bus stops at school and I’m the last to get off. I see Emma standing around doing nothing. She sees me and smiles. As a greeting, I blow off her cap. She rolls her eyes at me, then goes to pick it up. The bell rings.

I have gym right now, so I head over to the gym room. When I get there I start running laps around the room. Then I see the boys from yesterday. The leader is wearing a Michigan Wolverines cap. He looks at me. When he’s walking over, I can see a smirk plastered on his face.

He comes up to me, and says, "I'm Randy." My hand acts of its own accord. It sticks itself right in front of us, and Randy shakes it. He then laughs, and walks away. I guess that's his power.

A few minutes later the whole class is dribbling a basketball. Some people have no basketballs and they have to try and steal one from a person who does have a basketball. I keep my basketball the whole time. After that I have History class.

History class is boring. Mr. Walsk drones on and on about history (in this case, World War 2) while the class has to write notes. Right when I couldn't stand it, the heat of the classroom and the monotone of Mr. Walsk's voice sends me right into a deep sleep.

"Jason! Jason Casen! Wake up!" I jerk awake. Standing on top of me is Emma. "Have you been sleeping the entire time?" she asks incredulously. "Maybe..." I trail off sheepishly.

"Well, hurry up. We've got Writing class in two minutes. I'm just glad the classroom is next door." She leaves. I rub my eyes, grab my school bag, and head out the door.

Mrs. Gads is reading us a book called 'The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane'. After reading one chapter she closes the book and says, "I want you to write a story. Partner up and decide what genre you want to write about. The papers are over there." She indicates a stack of papers on her desk. "Partner up!"

I sit there, frozen. I'm horrible at finding partners. "Raise your hand if you don't have a partner!" Mrs. Gads says. I raise my hand. "Great, Jason, you'll partner up with Emma." Emma shrugs. *It's not my fault you don't have a partner.* I make the wind around her cold. She scowls. "Hey, Mrs. Gads, can we go in the hallway?" I ask. She nods. I stand up, and Emma follows me, taking a piece of paper along with her.

“Can we write a fantasy story?” Emma asks. I nod. “How about this fairy goes on an adventure and meets another fairy who doesn’t talk and then they almost die multiple times?” I ask. This time, Emma nods. I take out my pencil and Emma starts telling me what to write, and I modify some things. We do that for the whole hour. It’s 12:00 right now, so when the bell rings I grab my bag and head outside.

I see Randy and his friends laughing at some 1st grader. I walk over. “Cut it out,” I say. Randy and his friends just laugh even harder. The 1st grader runs off. Randy scowls. “You lost me my plaything!” I shrug. “You weren’t being very nice to him.” Randy holds up a fist. “Next time, Jason, next time. I’m warning you...” I shrug again. Walking off, I hear Randy growling. Next thing I know, he’s on me, punching and kicking. I fight with wind. The first three times, he gets blown off me. The fourth time Emma comes up behind me. “Get off him,” she says sweetly. Randy’s eyes mist up and he nods. “You five better go away,” she adds to his friends. Their eyes mist up and they nod also. They all go to the swing set. “Thanks,” I say. “Wave at me,” she says. I suddenly feel like I’m floating as I obey. “Sorry,” she says. Then, she says, “Say blue.” I ask her why. “I had to make sure I wasn’t using my charm speak,” she explains. I look over at Randy, and see him running towards me like a maniac. I wave, then use the wind to make him float back to the swing set. He then stays there for the rest of the recess.

I sit by myself during lunch. Thinking about some things. Sorry I haven’t confessed this to you, but before I was here my best friend used to be a boy Randy and my enemy used to be a girl named Emma. Things are backwards here. I’m not sure if I like it or not.

After lunch I go to Math class. We’re doing a math test. The teacher, Mr. Clus, told us to do our best and not to worry. The best part is that we got mints! When Mr. Clus is passing the tests out he says, “Just a simple math test, it’s not that hard. Although I must say,” he adds, “The

question on the back is really hard, and even though I've been teaching for 22 years, no one has ever been able to figure it out." This brought even the laziest people to sit up straight. I hear words like "I can do it!" and "Can I do it? I think I might be able to." I highly doubt that anyone would be able to do it.

After an hour the test is over. I look at Emma, and she's already done. I see a few other people had already finished also. The bell rings, and everyone hands in their tests. After that we go to Music Class.

We get recorders. I take a blue one and see that Randy had taken a red one. Well, red *is* hatred. We even get our own recorder books! We practice the notes D, C, B, A, and G. Then I tell the teacher, Ms. Vars, that I don't feel well and would like to go home. She nods and says I can go.

In the office the nurse takes my temperature and announces that I have a fever. I tell her that I can walk home myself. She nods and I leave.

At home I go outside. The sun sets after a few hours. I see Emma, and she sits down next to me. "Hi." Then I have a peculiar feeling. Like I do belong here.