

Precious Things

The autumn air was cool and crisp and the trees were covered with the most splendid colors; it was a perfect day. The trees flew by in a blur as the blue sedan flew down the road. As the pavement ended and vehicle hit the gravel road a voice came from the back seat, "Mom, how much longer will it be?" The plaintive voice belonged to a twelve year old boy with sandy blonde hair. "Only a little longer, Steven," answered his mother back. On the other side of the back seat sat another boy, he was a year older with light brown hair. The older of the two, sat listening to his music and not bothering anybody. The car rumbled down the road and then stopped in front of a large iron gate.

The gate doors were set into an immense stone arch. The once bright bricks had faded into blurred obscurity. The arch was set into a wall that was at least six feet tall and topped by a row of sharp looking spikes. The iron gates were decorated with inset shapes, each side bearing the design of a rearing horse. Carved into the stone were the words, "Agate Estates est. 1840."

Steven looked out his window and through the gates. Atop a rise sat a magnificent mansion. On either side were tall towers and above the entrance was a colossal stained glass window, depicting horses grazing in a field. Ivy covered any available space on the front of the mansion hiding the faded brick in its own green haze. To the right sat a stable, the weathered wood lent it an elegant beauty. The roofs of both the stable and mansion were of red tiles that still after years of punishment gave it classy look.

The mother pulled an iron key out of her pocket and walked to the gate; she pushed the key into the keyhole and turned. At first, it seemed nothing happened then with a clang, the gates opened. She got back into the car and began to drive up the driveway towards the mansion.

Kyle the older brother looked up just as they passed the stable and his mouth widened. "*That will be a neat place to explore!*" he thought. Then the car stopped in the drive and they got out of the car. All three looked up mouths hanging open in awe at this magnificent building, it was all theirs.

An hour later, the father arrived with U-Haul trailer and they began to unpack all their stuff. The house was already furnished so they did not have to bring any furniture. When they finished bring the boxes in and putting them into their right rooms the father took off to the nearby town to return the trailer.

It was getting dark so they decided to save unpacking for tomorrow. The mother went to the basement and found the fuse box with a flashlight. She flicked the master switch and the house lit up. The lights in the halls flickered on bathing the house in an inviting golden glow. In the dining room, crystal chandelier bathed the room in platinum light. The two children ran up the master staircase and into what was to be their rooms. Now there was only a bed a dresser in each but soon they would be able to unpack all their stuff.

That night at dinner the father began telling them, "I want you two to be careful you can explore wherever you want but if the floor looks cracked or anything like that don't go there or ask me or mom to go with you, promise?" Both kids replied, "I promise!"

The next day Kyle went outside after breakfast to go explore the fields and the stable while Steven decided he wanted to explore the attic. The attic was huge it was as long as the whole house. It had lots of chests and boxes but only one really caught his eye. It was a small back box with a brass lock on it. He walked over to it and tapped it once. The box immediately sprang open revealing inside a small statute on a marble base. It was a horse, an Arabian to be exact. It was carved in very intricate details and must have been very precious. He closed the small box and began walking away. He walked down the stairs and into his room; .He closed the door and took the small statue out onto his bed. It was very beautiful.

After he looked at it for a little while, he heard his mother call for lunch.
"So, did you have fun exploring today?" Their mother asked.
"Oh yes, definitely." Both the brothers answered.
The mother smiled and continued to eat

After lunch, it was time to unpack. Steven groaned as he walked up the stairs but he was done in only a few hours. But by then it was dinnertime. After that, the family went to the living room to watch some television. After a few hours, the two brothers were sent to bed. Kyle went into his room closed the door and turned his stereo on quietly. Steven closed his door and took the statue out again. He decided that tomorrow he would show it to his parents.

The next morning Steven woke up and opened his door, it seemed that his brother had already left. He was carrying the statue in his hand and walking down the stairs when suddenly he tripped. The statue flew through the air to land suddenly at the foot of the steps. When it hit the ground, the statue smashed into a million pieces. The base was all that was left. He began to cry a

little but he did not want his parents mad so he went and got a broom and a bag he swept the statue into the bag and ran up the stairs back to his room.

He closed the door and plopped onto his bed, this was the worst possible thing. The statue had been beautiful and he knew that his brother would have loved it. Now it was just dust. "Maybe something would be in the box," he thought. He went over to the box and looked inside, there lay an old looking piece of parchment. "That hadn't been there before," he thought. He picked it up; it was blank on both sides. He took it and the box over to his bed and laid it down. He was just staring when suddenly words began to materialize on it from nowhere.

It read, "You have broken something precious...it cannot be easily replaced...you need to be taught a lesson...how to treat other peoples' things. A tooth for a tooth an eye for an eye...I should destroy something you find precious, but I am not cruel. Take the bag and this piece of parchment to the field near the stables this is where it shall begin."

Steven immediately considered just not going so the punishment could not begin but then he thought better. It had already been done by magic so it could be worse if he did not go. He grabbed the bag and the piece of parchment, and went down the stairs and began walking towards the stables.

Kyle was looking around the field it had fallen fallow. The fences had pieces missing and the field was almost completely weeds, the stable was still in remarkable condition. Steven had reached the stable and looked at the parchment. It read. "Read these words, 'Eqqus, Solamnis, Nordira, and Pareceus'." Steven muddled through the words and when he finished the bag containing the statue's dust flew open. The dust flew out of the bag and flew into the field to where Kyle was standing he looked up just in time to see the dust fly down at him. It began to swirl around forming a vortex. It became a whirlpool, light seemed to bend into it making it completely black. The vortex stopped spinning and a beam of light shot out of it and flew into the stable it hit a small green crystal set into the stable wall in a bright flash of pure white light the stable, field and fence became brand new; in the pasture stood a beautiful but very startled looking white Arabian horse.