

Description Essay: Prompt #3
“The Golden Playground”

At the end of a quaint side-street in Cedar City, UT, in an era recently passed, lived “The Golden Playground.” Its very *raison d’etre* was to serve the children who bestowed life upon the grounds. It expressed its love by providing the perfect environment for a child's exuberant spirit; thus, as a regurgitation of love, the vast field of golden hills continued to live on, extending crisp amber foxtails toward the vibrant yellow sun amongst the heavens, fortifying its perimeters with earthen green walls of sagebrush, protecting a small fort made of shambled concrete slabs atop a small hill. With all this, “The Golden Playground” emanated an invitation of nature's adventure: Imagination.

Fortunately for the residents of the Midwestern house that directly neighbored the field. A house with a deep brown scraggly fence made of misshapen plies of peeling wood, a lush green lawn with a small pine tree surrounded by flowers off to the house's side, and even a large metal wagon wheel leaning on the large rocks in front of the house's walkway. Though, this house was not just a house; but, a home. A home of, back then, three young boys (the home now currently houses an additional young boy, even though the “young boys” of this story could no longer be considered such.) It even served as a second home for their cousin, who frequently visited and was of their age.

The eldest sibling of the home seldom mingled with his younger brothers, leaving the field for Jason, age 9, and Kenton, age 7, and also Cousin Sean, age 8; the perfect trio to occupy “The Golden Playground.”

In perfect reflection of “The Golden Playground,” Jason and Kenton were skinny, lanky, and had blond hair. When the wind blew, that hair rustled exactly as the foxtails of the field would: first, flying off into the wind until it curved, just so, releasing the air's graceful lift. When they trekked the fields going in and out of sight, and as you witnessed them doing such, the random appearances and disappearances matched the pattern of the intermittent sagebrushes. For these two, they were no human

intrusion upon this scene of nature, but a primal part of the scene; it was as if, in living adjacent to the fields imbued them with the seeping excess energy of the field, leading to the wholesome and complete acceptance of them by the lands.

Though, was it not the children who occupied and gave their love to the grounds that gave “The Golden Playground” its life? The two children were the primary source for “The Golden Playground.” If they, essentially, become one, fully synchronized, with the field, how could the two (the boys and the field) continue to effect each other? Where, and why, would there be excess?

The answer could only be found when Cousin Sean swam along them, there, in that Sea of Life. His image completely contrasted with that of his cousins. A huskier child with small dark curls, his hair bounced in the wind, swirling like the path a leaf in the wind travels downwardly. He was easily and instantly spotted in the fields. Yet, it didn't look as though he didn't belong among the Sea of Life's ebbing golden waves. One would pass by and see the three boys playing, and see, still, a completely natural part of every day life. This is because Nature does not discriminate. Cousin Sean was another child to fuel the system; contributing to the clanging of Stick Swords in a game of “Battle for the Best,” chewing on the grassy foxtails as a rootin' tootin' cowboy, releasing new odors by stepping in rabbit droppings. Sean, another child building the strong bonds of friendship at “The Golden Playground,” re-fertilizing the enriching soul of the grounds, and revitalizing the warm golden glow it is so rightly named after. That is nature's magic: to create existence from the depths of nothingness.

And so, for years, this was truly “The Golden Playground” of the three boys. Essentially, literally, it was such since the beginnings of each of their lives. Jason had been born first, the first to see these fields, which was most likely one of the first things he ever saw, and surely one of the first things he was every truly aware of. Nine months later, Sean follows Jason through the grotto between life and death. The very day after Sean's birth, he is taken to his cousins' house, is gently held by his Aunt Marie, and is lulled off to sleep sharing a cradle with his cousin Jason. Eleven months pass, the two are

crawling and learning to walk, when Kenton is born. The elder two have already seen the fields, unable to wait for the new soft-cheeked wonder would grow as they have, wish to share them with this new companion.

One sad summer, as “The Golden Playground” bellows out for the invigoration of being played upon, it is decided one part of the trio must leave. Cousin Sean has moved to Florida, far away from his beloved fields. Twelve years elapse; and the years weigh heavily. Though the three of them had begun to spend less time at “The Golden Playground,” the process had been kicked into overdrive, and no amount of short visits back could stop it. Even the new addition of another sibling, Nash, could not quell the rapid siphoning of life from the fields.

Just as the final drop of the fields’ life was to drip away into the vast emptiness, when the land saw no other choice but to release its death clutch upon memories of the boys’ brilliant and smiling faces as they ran across the dried topsoil with a lowly audible crunch, the universe offers the fields a fate of new life, to rise from the dust of its barren wasteland. The only requirement is to trust in the future, letting go of its last drop of golden nectar, and breathe its dying breath. In true resemblance of all nature, it showed faith in the world’s ability to keep moving forward, and accepted its death. If “The Golden Playground” were an entity, it would have shed no tears as the machines tore into its earth.

Yes, the city bought the land. The public of Cedar City finally sees in that undeveloped land what those three boys knew it was for their whole lives: a place for children to grow and have fun. Its fate was a blessing. The land had been reincarnated as a true park, as Pinocchio was transformed from a puppet into a real boy. Monkey bars, swings, slides, picnic tables, pavilions, wood chips, a sprinkler system, sidewalk, and the deepest green grass one could ever see, all of this together transforms the piece of land, granting its one true wish.

The three boys witnessed the project, and approved. For the two siblings, everyday they see the new park. For Cousin Sean, when he finds his way back to Utah on a visit, he can also view the park.

They all see the same park as everyone else. That's reality, that when any one person sees the park, they will see a green wonderland. But for those three special survivors of an passed era that only existed for them, they also see the residual golden glow in the air that is the remnant, the new life that was nourished on the last drop of the golden nectar, of "*Their* Golden Playground."

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