The Secret City, 989 words

“Sweep the floor, clean the gutters, wash the rug, do the laundry, and then polish every bit of silverware that we own. When you are done, come see me for dinner.”

“Yes Aunt Mary”. Oliver, a disgruntled boy of fifteen trudged away silently, scolding himself for listening to his cruel Aunt Mary *again.* Oliver was a miserable boy who lived with his Aunt and Uncle on the coast of New York. His parents had both passed in a car crash four years ago, and he had been unhappy ever since. Every day Oliver woke at the crack of dawn to do his Aunt and Uncle’s bidding. He worked hard until that one day, when his foster parents decided to send him away.

Oliver woke up at 4:00 am, knowing that this day would be just like any other. He would sweep the floor, clean the gutters, wash the rug, do all of the laundry, and polish silverware until it gleamed and glistened. However, when he made his way down to the kitchen, his “parents” were already at the table.

“Oliver! Glad you’re up honey, take a seat! We have some exciting news!,” His Aunt exclaimed.

“Alright….. what’s this all about Aunt Mary?”

“We received a letter in the mail, and it states that your grandfather requests your presence!”

“Really? I haven’t seen him in eight years!”

“I know! It’s a great opportunity!”

“Sure Aunt Mary, if you say so…”

“Perfect! You will be going to his mansion in Lexington, Kentucky in two days.”

“Alright, I’m going to pack!”

“Oh, no you aren’t! You will complete the chores I have laid out for you, and *then* you will start your packing.”

“Yes, Aunt Mary.” Oliver could hardly contain his excitement! He was finally going to get off this awful property! He ran back up to his tiny bedroom, and yelled into his pillow. “Forget what Aunt Mary said, I’m packing this instant!” He hastily threw toiletries, garments, and all his comics into a big yellow suitcase. He combed his messy brown hair, and cleaned his stinky, tiny room as if he were leaving today. He rushed through his chores, going as quickly as possible so he could plan out the grand adventure he was about to embark on.

When two days were finally over, Oliver put on his best suit, combed his hair again, picked little sleep crumbs off his bright green eyes, and washed his pale freckled face as if he were going to prom. He rushed down the steps, dragging his incredibly heavy suitcase behind him. “Good riddance “mum and dad!!”

Oliver climbed down the porch steps and walked to the shuttle that was waiting just for him. The ride to the airport was long and boring, but when he arrived, oh how good did he feel! He breezed through security and waited a long hour at his gate. He said an awkward goodbye when his plane arrived, and he was off to Kentucky!

“Welcome to Haven Manor, how may I help you?” the butler said. An enormous door stood before him.

“My name is Oliver, and I’m here to see my grandfather!” Oliver declared proudly.

“Yes, right away sir,” the servant said. When Oliver finally “met” his grandfather, he was stunned. He expected he would be happy to see him, but no. The first thing he said was,

“Just send him to his chamber and leave.” Oliver liked the new setup, but not his grandfather. All day Oliver wandered the massive grounds, hoping to find something fun. He would jump rope out in the garden, or just sit alone with his thoughts. One day, he was bored out of his mind. He tried to explore more of the garden, but he knew he had seen every inch of it already. He sat against the stone wall, hoping to discover something exciting. Suddenly, the stone wall caved in, and Oliver fell into a soft patch of grass. A kid’s face peered back at him.

“AAAAHHHHH!!! Who are you!?!?”

“I’m Matilda. It’s nice to finally meet you Oliver! How are you on this beautiful day?

“I-I’m fine, h-how are you?”

“Oh, I’m wonderful, just wonderful, but you seem confused. Why don’t I lead you to the mayor?”

“Alright, get on with it then.”

“Perfect!” Matilda shouted. As Oliver got his bearings, he realized he was in a humongous city that was filled with kids of all ages. Strangers greeted him on the street, and Matilda knew everyone’s name. She marched Oliver up a staircase to meet someone she called the “mayor”. They reached the top of the staircase, and Oliver was stunned by what he saw. A mighty castle stood before him, and the guards were kids! A girl in a pale green suit walked out of the double doors. She was a slender redhead, with hair as long as Rapunzel’s, done in two massive braids! She walked with such power, he felt the urge to bow. She was stunning.

“Hello Oliver. I’ve been expecting you.”

Oliver was taken into the castle, and led to yet *another* garden. It was bigger than his grumpy grandfathers, and surprisingly, even more beautiful. There were cobalt lakes filled with swans, grass so green it looked like it would never need water again, and so many flowers it looked like a painting.

“If you don’t mind me asking miss, but… who are you?”

“I’m Mayor Anya, but my friends call me Miss A.”

“Mayor Anya? Alright then. Does my grandfather know about this?”

“Heavens no! Only kids who stumble upon the magic wall know where we are, and what we are.”

“What are we then?”

“We’re kids who need freedom from our horrid lives. Apparently, you have things going on.”

“Yes. Can *anyone* live here?”

“Of course.”

“Even me?”

“Yes Oliver, even you. You must take an oath, swearing kindness to all citizens, and then we can discuss what’s ahead…”