

Beauty is...  
change  
and  
laughter

By Torrey Mahall

## Beauty is... change and laughter

I woke up to the sound of my older sister practically screaming my name. If you have an older sister, you know it's not a pretty sound. Not even close.

"Heather! Heather! HEATHER!"

"What?" I replied, not nearly as excited as her. I knew why she had woken me up so early. 6:30 is not regular for me. And even less regular for her. On weekends, she usually is up around 9:00. I pressed my face into my pillow, not wanting to hear what my sister had to say. Or more like, had to scream.

"Heather! WAKE UP! Today is...is..." My sister got so excited she didn't finish her sentence. I finished it for her.

"Moving day. I know. Moving day sucks."

"Whatever. GET READY!" Still being overly dramatic, she ran out of my room.

I rolled out of bed. Groggily, I got dressed, did my hair, and went downstairs to breakfast. As I sat down at the table, I remembered that this was the last meal I would ever have at this house. *This* house. *My* house. A house that was the best house in the world.

About an hour later, I came back down the stairs carrying one box. I wanted to bring five to Utah, but there was this stupid state rule that said you could only bring one. I felt really bad leaving all of my beautiful things. They were so important to me, and I wanted to take all of them, but I couldn't. I just picked out my most favorite, which was hard, and put them all in one box.

"So long old house," I whispered as I stepped out the door. "I'll never see you again, and I'm really going to miss you."

After a long flight to Utah, I was finally able to see the house. It wasn't what I expected. Mom had always told me our house was going to be better for the family, but it was worse. Way worse. And by worse I mean smaller. Way smaller.

"How is *that* better for the family?" I asked Mom.

"It's less expensive, and closer to a school." Those were the only reasons she'd give me.

It took about a week to get all of the furniture in and all the other things. I hated the house. My room was so much smaller, and it wasn't even my room. I had to share with Holly. Also, it was one story. I was used to stairs, and I loved using the handrail as a slide. It was a slow slide, because I was careful about not falling off, but it was a slide all the same. I hated our new house.

Summer was ending. I thought it was a wasted summer. I had to say goodbye to all my friends and the things that I loved. They were still in Washington, which is where I probably left most of me.

When the school year started, I was prepared. Mostly. I had my pencils and just about everything you need for school, but in a way, I was unprepared too. I was unprepared for what was about to happen. The big mood shift.

So the day I started sixth grade I was sort of alone and isolated. Everybody had his or her friends already from the grades before. I was "the new girl."

At first I didn't notice it, but I wasn't the only one who was, apparently, new to the school. While I was walking around aimlessly at recess, I noticed some other kid, a boy, standing by a tree and examining a stick. He looked like he might be in first grade. He had light brownish hair and big round eyes. I wondered what he was doing, so I went over to him.

"What're you doing?" I asked.

He continued rubbing and poking at the stick. "It could be a dinosaur bone. It feels like it." Then he threw it up in the air and it landed down on the floor with a thud. I could tell this kid was a dinosaur fanatic. He had on a green shirt with a bunch of dinosaurs on it and some jeans with a dinosaur on the pocket.

"I don't think that's a dinosaur bone, kid."

"Trevor."

"What?"

"Trevor. My name's Trevor."

"Oh."

There was an awkward silence. He picked up his "dinosaur bone" or more like "stick" and said to me, "What do you think of when you're sad?"

"Huh?" Did a little first grader just ask me a really meaningful question?

"What do you think of when you're sad? I think of dinosaurs."

"Uh...nothing, really, I guess."

"You should think of something that makes you happy. Something you want back or want to happen in the future. If you think hard enough, you'll feel like it's still there. Maybe it is."

"Maybe what is?"

"Maybe the thing you want is still there. In your heart."

"Uh..." I was left speechless. I needed to review what had just happened. Okay, so I walked up to a first grader and he started talking about dinosaur bones. That seemed regular. But then the conversation somehow turned to... remembering things you lost. Did Trevor have an experience with this? Did he lose something of importance? And the most confusing thing is, am I really the right person to talk to about all of this?

"So what's your story?" asked Trevor. "Are you new, too?"

"Yeah, I'm new."

"Where from?"

"Washington..."

"Ah, where it rains all the time. What are you in Utah for?"

"Moved."

"Why?"

"I dunno. We just...did."

"We moved too. From Chicago. I miss the winds and my old house. It was much bigger and nicer, and because of the one box rule, I left most of my most beautiful stuff there. But I found beauty here, too."

"Like what?" I asked. I left all the beauty in Washington. I couldn't really take any of it with me. How could Trevor find beauty here if he was missing his old town so much?

"Beauty is change. And things changed. For the better. And beauty is laughter. There's plenty of that. Just listen to the things around you. On this playground, children are laughing and playing and having a good time. You should join in. Don't think about what you've left behind, think about what's coming. Things are going to change. And they're going to change for the better. You should start

laughing and accepting the change and you should start being grateful for what you've got now. That's what I did."

Then Trevor walked away as if nothing had ever happened. As if we had never had a conversation. As if he had never corrected my life and made me feel a lot better.

Over the next few days, I tried to make friends and have fun. I actually got to like the new house, even though it took me a while to get used to it. And I figured out that Trevor was right. Beauty was change and laughter, two things that moving or a new school could never take away from me. I think I learned a very important lesson. Be grateful and then you'll find real beauty in everything.