

# The Abandoned City

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Marion Express

Almost everyone wants to be something more than they are, they want to make a difference and matter in the world. I am definitely one of those people. It's hard to do something so amazing that everyone will remember you. This is my story of how I did exactly that. When I was thirteen years-old I found the world's greatest discovery.

"Emily! Come help me move these boxes into the new exhibit," my dad called.

"Coming!" I yelled back.

My parents are the owners of our very own museum, The Museum of the Future. It's actually pretty cool. They have a lot of prototypes that helped shape today's world. For example, the first telephone, lightbulb, printing press, and other life-changing discoveries like that. We're adding a new exhibit and it is dedicated solely to the changes that are yet to come. It's super cool with "prototypes" of smart clothes, a miniature hyperloop, invisibility cloaks, and so much more.

"Are you coming, Emily?" my dad asked again.

"Yeah, almost there."

When I walked into the new exhibit I gasped from the sheer size of it. I had no idea how we were going to fill the massive room.

"This room is amazing!" I exclaimed. "How are you going to fill it?"

"Oh you know with our little knick knacks we have lying around," my mom smiled as she walked into the room. My mom and I look exactly alike. It's almost scary. We both have curly brown hair and freckles. The only difference is my mom has brown eyes, and I have my dad's green eyes.

I smiled back at her and told her, "This room is going to be so cool. It will attract so many visitors!"

"Hopefully," my dad sighed, "we really need the business."

The museum wasn't doing so well, but this exhibit will change that, I just had a feeling. I started unpacking the boxes and I was amazed at everything I saw. I was having so much fun helping my parents when I came across the strangest thing. It was a rusty, beat up, old ring. I twisted it all around in my fingers, inspecting it closer.

“How did this get in here?” I wondered. “Hey da-” I started saying, but I never got to finish my sentence. Suddenly everything was swirling and the room tipped upside down, and all around. It felt like forever, but in reality it was probably only five minutes before the room finally stopped moving. When I finally regained my senses I realized I was still in the same room, but it was vastly different. All of the boxes were gone, everything was unpacked, and my parents were gone. Something else wasn't right though, the exhibit didn't look new or awesome. It looked old, dusty, and abandoned. I needed to figure out what happened and fast before something bad happened. I had a terrible feeling about all of this.

“Mom, Dad!” I called. There was no response, so I tried again. “MOM! DAD!” I yelled. Still, there was only silence. My thoughts were whirling around my head, and the one conclusion that I could make was that this couldn't be real. I tried to convince myself of this, but I was still unsure, so I decided to go out to the city of San Francisco, and see what I could find. When I walked out of the museum doors, what I saw shocked me.

The entire city was in ruins, the museum was one of the only buildings left standing. Even the Golden Gate Bridge collapsed, right down the middle. To make matters worse there wasn't a person in sight. I started to panic. Where was everyone? What happened to the buildings? Where were my parents?

“Hello!” I yelled, “Anyone here? Anybody?”

My parents always told me I shouldn't wander the city alone, but if my parents saw my circumstances I'm sure they would understand. As I walked down the abandoned streets, a shiver of fear went down my spine. I had the overwhelming urge to just sit down and start crying until everything made sense again. I knew I had to keep going though, I had to find my family. I had been walking for about ten minutes when I came across a middle aged woman leaning against a wall. She had scraggly black hair, and a slight build. She might have been beautiful if she wasn't so dirty.

I approached her nervously and said, "Excuse me, miss."

The lady jumped, and when she looked at me, her gaze seemed to pass right through me. Her eyes were a piercing emerald green, much like mine.

"Hello," I tried again. "What happened here, what happened to the beautiful San Francisco I know?"

"You lost or something kid?" she asked in a deep gravelly voice.

When I didn't answer she continued talking, "Well if you really don't know you must have been living under a rock." At this point she took a shallow breath and started explaining what happened. "About a week ago the largest earthquake the earth has ever seen rocked our city. It destroyed everything, and took countless lives. The people that did survive went to seek refuge in states on the East Coast. It's going to take years to fix the devastation it caused. Years we don't have."

She finished and that faraway look came back to her eyes. It was clear I wasn't going to get much more out of her, but I still had one more question.

"What year is it?" I asked in a quiet voice.

“2049,” she answered. With that she walked away leaving me stranded in the middle of an abandoned city.

I couldn't even begin to comprehend what I heard, but I knew she was right. That was the only logical answer to it, even if it was completely illogical. I knew something had to be done to prevent this disaster from happening. The first thing I had to do though, was get home. It didn't take a genius to realize that the ring must have brought me here. So, it only makes sense that the ring could bring me back. I took the ring from my pocket, that's where I stashed it when I arrived in the future, and began inspecting it. I turned it over in my hands, like I did before, and just like earlier the world started whirling. Colors were combining and it was impossible to tell which way was up. After a little while it stopped, and the bright sun blinded me as I tried to collect my bearings.

I looked around and I quickly realized that I was in the middle of the street, and cars were all around me. They slammed the brakes to avoid hitting me, and I scurried on the sidewalk before anyone could ask me any questions. They looked a little bewildered considering a teenage girl just appeared out of nowhere. That was my last concern though, I had to get to my parents and tell them about what I saw. When I arrived at the museum my parents were sitting on the front steps looking extremely concerned, but when they saw me relief flooded their faces.

“Where were you?” my dad asked.

“We were worried sick, you know you're not supposed to wander the city alone!” my mom exclaimed.

“Just listen to me,” I said calmly, “I have to tell you something very important.”

I proceeded to tell them exactly what happened, not leaving out a single detail. I made sure to tell them that this was real. I knew it sounded crazy, but they had to believe me, it was

critical that they did. When I finished telling my story they just stared at me. They were clearly wondering if I needed some mental help.”

“I know it sounds absolutely insane,” I said. “But-”

“That’s because it is insane,” my mom exclaimed, cutting me off.

I realized that no matter what I said, they weren’t going to believe me. I had to show them what I was talking about.

I turned to my dad and started giving orders. “Take this ring,” I commanded, “Start turning it over in your hands. When you arrive in the future take a quick look around, and then turn the ring in your hands again. You should arrive back here. Don’t wander far from the museum though because you come back to the same spot you were standing when you left the future.”

My mom and dad shared the parent's look. The look they give each other when they know they’re child is lying, but then they decide to play along.

“Ok fine, if this makes you realize how insane you sound, I’ll do it,” my dad sighed.

He did exactly what I said and two seconds later he disappeared, just like I said he would. My mom’s eyes grew as big as saucers, and she stood in complete shock. She looked at me, and then back to where my dad was, and then back to me a few times. It only took a few minutes before my dad reappeared right before our eyes.

“Holy cannoli!” my dad yelled. “You were right, we have to do something about this.”

With my entire family in agreement we headed to the mayor’s office to find a way to fix this. When we arrived we explained everything that happened, and showed her what we were talking about. She agreed some things needed to be put in place to ensure the safety of our city, so she declared an emergency board meeting. From there we all put our heads together to figure

out ways to protect our city. We agreed that the best way to protect us was to upgrade the structural integrity of all of our buildings, and find a new material that will help absorb shock waves. I felt so lucky to be a part of protecting our future, it was so surreal. What was even more amazing was that the mayor asked me to give a small speech at the press conference, to help relax the people.

Of course there were people that thought all of us lost our minds, and then there were people that completely flipped out and were already planning to move. But, overall the people were pretty understanding. We were ensuring the safety of our city and protecting it from something that otherwise, would have been devastating. I was nervous though, to give a speech to the entire world. Who wouldn't be? I spent days preparing it until it was finally perfect. When I walked out onto that stage, I wasn't nervous, I was empowered.

I took a deep breath and began to talk, "Almost everyone wants to be something more than they are, they want to make a difference and matter in the world. I am definitely one of those people. It's hard to do something so amazing that everyone will remember you. Sometimes though, having everyone remember you isn't even the best part. The best part is knowing that you were a part of something greater than yourself. The best part is knowing that you helped save countless lives. The best part is protecting our future children and grandchildren. By discovering a way to access the future, we can now protect it by changing the present. Don't wait until everything is broken to be a hero. The time to be a hero is now, in the present, when it matters. I want all of us to be a part of building tomorrow's future. We have a chance to change the world, so let's take it."