

## The Mysterious Gift

By Andrew

It was a chilly winter morning when I got the gift. Winter break had just begun, and I was ready to kick back and relax, when I saw a glittering object on my front porch. At first, I thought it was a trick of the light, but when I opened my front door, I realized I was wrong.

In front of me was a box no bigger than my hands, wrapped in silver paper that shined brightly, even in the dim lighting from the still rising sun. Though the air was frigid, the package was warm when I picked it up. It was tied shut with a white string that was attached to a tag that read:

“To the one who believes in wonder”.

I stood there in the cold for a moment, attempting to decipher the tag’s meaning. Sure, I believed in wonder as much as the next person, but enough to deserve a gift? Nonetheless, this box was on my doorstep, and I certainly wasn’t going to share it with my family.

I brought the gift inside and placed it on the kitchen table.

My family was still asleep, and I could hear the soft hum of the fan I always kept on in my room. I looked at the gift, half expecting it to vanish. The silver paper shined brighter, almost like it contained a shrunken version of the sun.

I nervously fidgeted, not out of fear exactly, but more out of concern.

What if the package was dangerous?

Eventually, I convinced myself to unwrap it. Inside was not what I expected.

The gift did not contain a magic animal, toy, or device. On the contrary, inside the box was a small mirror.

The mirror was a thin oval, surrounded by a rim of wood. I lifted the mirror up to my face and looked at my reflection. And it looked back at me like a reflection should.

Then my reflection blinked. It stopped mirroring me and gave me a look of disappointment. I stared right back at it with a mixture of shock and surprise.

“You forgot,” it said.

“Forgot what?” I replied.

“What other people think of you isn’t that important.” It responded.

“I’m still confused.”

“Even when other people judge you for everything, they can’t take away who you are as long as you don’t let them.”

“But what about family?”

“If they really love you, they won’t hate you for who you are.”

“But if they are adults, it’s not like I can get them to stop,” I shot back.

“Sometimes, even adults need to grow up and face the world.”

The reflection flickered and vanished, leaving behind a cold, hard, emotionless mirror.

I stood there for a few minutes and thought to myself about what my reflection had said. It made me remember an old poem I had once heard. It went something like this:

### **Hope**

**By Andrew**

The child is held by the waterfall

Only a baby

The child cries

Senses danger in the green forest

Taken away by evil

The fire rages

The earth shakes

The water weeps

The wind howls  
Evermore?

The brother goes to help  
Crosses land and sea  
A path of pain  
Beholds the mountain  
Hope.

The brother climbs  
Faced with peril  
Denies his fear  
He sees the end  
But evil blocks the way  
The brother stands.  
He fears failure  
Yet he swears to protect those in his heart.

Nothing can stand in his path  
The evil withers and vanishes  
The brother reunites  
The fire glows  
The earth slows  
The water flows  
The wind blows  
Evermore.

No longer just a brother.  
A hero is made.

Perhaps the poem's message was that sometimes, no matter who you are, you have to be the hero. And even the hero fears judgement. We are social creatures, but we know ourselves better than anyone else.

I looked back at the gift box, but it had vanished. Perhaps the true gift wasn't the mirror, but the reminder. I suppose we could all use that reminder now more than ever.

**END**