

GRADY WHILL AND THE TEMPLETON CODEX

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EXCERPT

I'd like to say that life improved, but I'd be telling you a lie. Elwood Bledsoe continued to bully Aarush. While Aarush constantly cautioned me to rein in my reaction to him, I could not. It landed me in two more detentions, and the last one finally cost me my job at the supermarket where I bagged groceries.

“You're coming for dinner,” Aarush informed me one afternoon.

I shook my head. “Can't.”

Aarush neatly packed his brown bag with unfinished food and said, “You have to come over. You're not working. Tonight they are announcing the winners of the Find My Power Essay on television. Devon Neely has to win. Imagine losing your sight and learning— ”

“Aarush, they'll never accept a blind kid.”

“They took that girl Lydia,” he blurted.

They had indeed.

“She's not blind,” he retorted.

I raised my eyebrow. She hardly looked like someone people expected to make it into the Temple. All I could recall was she seemed most unremarkable. Most of the kids who were accepted had a rare talent. They could run the fastest or do math without a pen or paper. I couldn't remember what made her special.