

“Perennial”

By Peyton Black

As John opened his eyes he realized that he was somewhere he had not seen before. He got up off of the ground to see that the area around him was vastly different from the room he had once known. It had changed into a redwood forest and it seemed like the trees went into the sky as far as he could see. As John took a look around he thought, "What is this place?" As he was looking around he noticed something on the ground, it was his grandfather's chain watch that was given to him by his parents on the day that John heard the news of his grandfather's death. John picked the watch up and opened it. John realized that there was a picture of him and his grandfather from back when John was 8, but then noticed that the hour and minute hands were gone. John closed the watch and put it in his pocket. John then looked back at his surroundings and felt a chill go down his spine as he felt a presence and knew that something was watching him. He scanned his surroundings again and saw that there was a creature that resembled a dog, it resembled the Newfoundland dog breed, one of his favorites. He decided to try and get closer so he could pet it, and as he stepped forward he tried to speak to it, but found that he couldn't, "Why can't I speak?" he thought. At that moment the creature changed from a dog into a giant eagle, he watched as it opened its giant wings and saw as it flew up then it disappeared into the trees above.

John fully realized after what had just happened that he was somewhere that was not natural, it was magical. He tried to think about what he had done the day before but he couldn't recall anything that had happened, now that he was thinking about it he couldn't remember anything about his life from before this day apart from his own name, John, and that his grandfather had died when he was 17. He was confused as to why he couldn't remember about

the days before but thought about how it would be in his best interest to try and find a town or city so he decided to head west into the forest, at least he thought it was west. While he was walking through the forest he took some time to take in his surroundings, the beautiful flowers, the humongous redwood trees, the plentiful shrubbery. But as he was walking he felt as though something was off. Then it hit him, a feeling of dread, a feeling that something was following him, something big.

As John thought about what to do he heard the whatever was following him get closer and he started to panic knowing that the creature following him was getting closer and decided that he would start walking faster to try and get further away from it. He continued walking through the forest looking for an opening to see if he could find a town, but he heard that whatever it was that was following him was getting further away as he was walking faster through the forest. He then saw a bright light in the distance, and as he approached the light he saw that the light got bigger, then he realized that it was a clearing, an open field. He started running, as he got to the clearing he thought about what may have been following him, "Could it have been that shape shifting creature I had seen when I had woken earlier?"

As John looked off into the open area that he had just gotten into he noticed that it seemed to be getting darker and decided to reach into his pocket and take his grandfather's chain watch and opened it to check the time, as he opened it he remembered that the clock hands were missing. John then also noticed that the watch had changed, he saw that there was a crack on the glass and that the picture of him and his grandfather had a tear. As he looked closer he realized that the tear had started at the top in between him and his grandfather. John was confused as to how the tear had gotten there but decided that he needed to keep going. He closed the watch and

put it back in his pocket. John felt a chill go down his spine, “It’s s-so c-c-cold...” he thought as he looked up and noticed something had changed, he was somewhere new.

As John checked the surrounding area that to him just appeared out of nowhere. From what he could tell he seemed to be in a snow covered wasteland, he noticed large craters and trenches that had mud at the bottom with some snow patches, the trenches were surrounded by barbed wire and broken or burned fences. John looked behind him and noticed that there was a building off in the distance, “Is that a log cabin?” he thought as he started walking towards the building. As he got closer he thought he saw a shadow in the top floor window, the shadow of what looked like a young boy. John noticed then that the shadow of a man appeared behind the boy and the man set his hand on the boy’s shoulder, leading him from the window. John decided that he was going to go and talk to the people in the cabin. When he got to the front door of the cabin he knocked on the door and waited for an answer, he stood there for what seemed like 5 minutes, no answer. John knocked on the door again and waited, and waited, and waited. He finally decided to try and call out to the people in the cabin.

As he opened his mouth to try and say something he felt the same presence from the creature that was following him through the forest he had been in earlier, but this time it was stronger, bigger, much more threatening than before. John started banging on the door hoping that the people inside would open the door so he could get inside before the creature got to him. John looked behind him thinking, “It can’t be that close right?” but when he looked off into the distance he saw that the creature was getting very close, it seemed to be about the size of a Livyatan, a prehistoric creature that as a game hunted the Megalodon. As John saw that the creature was only about one minute away from reaching him he decided that he was going to barge into the house and apologize to the people there afterwards.

John pulled the door to the cabin open, went inside, and slammed the door shut. He turned around and thought about how he was going to explain to the people why he barged into their house. He noticed that the ground looked as if it was made of dirt and he knelt down to try and grab some, and when he dug his hand into the ground he realized that he wasn't inside of a cabin at all. John looked up and saw gravestones, he was in a graveyard. "What am I doing here? I thought I was just outside of a cabin." he said aloud. "Wait, I'm able to speak, how though? What caused me to not be able to speak before?" he questioned while talking to himself. John decided to look around to see if the people he had seen in the window of the cabin were inside the graveyard. As John looked through the graveyard to try and find the people he read what was written on the graves, James Brown 1887-03-09, Peyton Black 1904-07-22, Jonathan Darwin 1968-01-04, John Gavin 2015-11-30. John stopped at the last tombstone and took a second look at what was written on the grave.

"That name, John Gavin, I think I've heard that name before, it sounds oddly familiar..." John said, as he was looking over the rest of the tombstone, he noticed something, the grave had a time written on it. "10:54 pm" was the time written on the tombstone. John took his grandfather's chain watch out of his pocket and opened it. He remembered that the clock hands were gone earlier, but when he looked at the watch he noticed that the clock hands had come back. John looked at the picture and the tear had gone all the way through the picture he saw that the tear was between young John and his grandfather. As he looked at the picture he noticed that his head was gone. He thought that was weird and decided that he would fix the picture later. John checked the time and noticed that it was 10:54 pm then he noticed that the hands weren't moving, and John saw that the glass had broken and there were shards of glass falling out of the watch.

John looked back at the tombstone and realized that it was his name on the tombstone, he was John Gavin. When John realized that it was his name on the tombstone he dropped his grandfather's chain watch and as it hit the ground the watch completely fell apart, he had broken his grandfather's last gift to him. As John grabbed the pieces of the watch he felt sorrow and layed on the ground. While he lay there he started to fall asleep. Within two minutes of lying there he felt himself fall into a deep slumber... As John opened his eyes he realized that he was somewhere he had not seen before. He got up off of the ground to see that the area around him was vastly different from the room he had once known. It had changed into a redwood forest...