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# The Golden Key

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Bria Black

*The Golden Key*

There was a little town called Sunflower Valley, in Goldfield, Nevada, that was inhabited by the most kind-hearted people you would ever meet. With a population of 395, one can imagine how close everyone was. You would see a firefighter walking his dog in the neighborhood where he would know the owner of an organic marketplace, who would be best of friends with a teacher at Lilywood Elementary School, who would be the neighbor of one of her very own students, Margret Little. Each of them knew each other and everyone else, and everyone in Sunflower Valley knew everyone. News would spread like a wildfire, so it came as no surprise that everyone heard about what happened at Lilywood Elementary School on April 10th, 1997.

What you and I would perceive as a normal day was in fact the biggest and most festive day for the students at Lilywood Elementary. It was a day that students had prepared for all school year and when the day came, the students wanted to go out with a bang. Everyday up until this special day, the school had been an organized chaos, like ants scabbling to build a new home. This was the day of the annual Lilywood science fair, when parents would come out to see the mayor of Sunflower visit the school, greet the students, give a speech, judge the science fair projects, and give a very special prize to the kid who had the single most impressive science project. And boy, every kid wanted that prize. (Even the teachers had the incentive of feeding their pride and bragging all year that it was his or her student who had won the golden key.) Of course, only the big dogs of the school participated, the 5th graders, while the kindergarten-through-fourth-grade students joined to watch the show with big, round, googly eyes and fantasized about being the kid who would walk across the stage with the hugest grin anyone had

ever seen, greet Mayor Daisy, shake her hand, and win the golden key. There were two fifth graders in particular who had been fantasizing about this, and finally the day had come. Margret Little and Peter Poe. Don't let Margret Little's looks fool you; she had apple-red-rosy cheeks, cute freckles, red pigtails, and big brown eyes. One would think she was the sweetest girl, but she was just the opposite. Margret Little was a know-it-all smarty-pants who had to be the best at everything, and I mean everything. Peter Poe, on the other hand, was modest, average in his classes, and not quite as social, but he worked hard on his science project and wanted to win the golden key more than anyone.

It was judgement time. All the students gathered around their projects and proceeded to present to Mayor Daisy as she went around and heard each and everyone's presentation. Margret Little went first, and she had created a volcano that was out of this world. At the touch of one button, Lava rushed out like a drink that had been shaken, and bright red-orange goo oozed out of the rocky brown substance. Everyone was impressed, and by this time, all the other students had already made up their minds that Margret Little would win the golden key, and they were okay with this realization. However, there was one kid left to present, Peter Poe. Peter's project was a basic model of the solar system that lacked in visual satisfaction. Cardboard pieces were tearing off, rings around the planets were falling, and glue tipped the edges of his work. It was not the best, but Peter put a lot of effort into this, his best effort.

Kids were all riled up until the time came for Mayor Daisy to walk up on stage, give her speech, and announce the winner. The anticipation grew thicker and thicker in the air as it finally came time to hear who won. Mayor Daisy ended her speech by saying, "may the odds be in your favor, and without further ado, the winner of the Golden key this year is . . ." Applause fell upon the crowd, shouts of joy filled the room, and smiles appeared amongst everyone, as Margret

Little walked on stage to receive the Golden Key. (You would think that she had won a lottery.) She had finally did it, but what everyone did not know is, she did not do it at all. She did not do her own project; it was her mother who had worked on the project for her. She explained this to everyone with a sincere, sorrowful facial expression, and everyone fell silent. However, she knew this was a game of fairness, and she proceeded to say, “I believe that this key belongs to Peter Poe, who had worked the hardest on this project and put heart into it.” And at this time, Peter Poe was the rightful winner of the Golden Key.

This is a story of integrity and fairness, not just within the students of Sunflower, but in all of us. This is a tale of what is right and what is moral. No matter how young we are or how old, how smart, how social, how shy, we all are living in a world where we have the responsibility to uphold fairness, even in the smallest of things.