

WAY TO SHILOH

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THE STORY OF THE BOY ON WORLD ISLAND

I want to tell you about an island and the people that live upon it. It is a story that I tell, but I wonder whether we all do not live upon a similar island.

The island was large and was called 'World Island'. Now there was a particular boy who lived upon that island. He had been born very poor and walked around in rags, as most people did there. Ever since he was young he had lived by his own ways (doing whatever he wanted), this made him even poorer. One day someone came and told him about a map and the treasure that this map guided people to. The boy was told that, no matter how many people found the treasure, it never ran out. It was said that the treasure was not what you might expect, it was not money but was very costly. It was also said that the person who had first written the map had originally made the island.

Now, Death roamed the island and he killed people as he went. He was a big problem so people tried to avoid him. If you meet with him you'd rarely survive, but there were occasions of people even looking death in the eyes and surviving to tell the tale.

The map was well known about, some believed that what the map said was true and others didn't. It was not hard to get your hands on a copy of the map, although it hadn't always been that way. In the past there were only a few maps and some not even in a language people could understand, but helpful people changed it into the right language for people to read and follow.

So, on hearing about the map, the boy got hold of a copy. The map told of the history of the island. This was shocking to the boy for it said that Death had not always been there, but that the people of the island had invited him there because he promised them things, however, he was always lying and none of these things were true. The map also said, a rather puzzling but amazing thing, that the person who had written the map had therefore come onto the island himself and met with Death and survived, even though Death had first killed him (the boy didn't understand this bit but somehow knew that the treasure was something to do with this). The map showed the way to the treasure, which was marked with a cross.

Now, the boy went seeking after the treasure, trying to follow the map. He noticed, on his way, people who were not dressed in rags like him but were in simple but smart new clothes and these people always helped him and explained bits of the map to him setting him in the right direction. Some days he followed the map and some days he didn't, but he got closer and closer to the treasure. One day he met two other people along the way who said they were also looking for the treasure. They were also dressed in rags as he was.

The two others were very frightened because they said they had just met with an old wise man in a long cloak who had told them to be very careful because Death was waiting for them around the next corner. He had said that it was one of Death's favourite spots and many had been killed there.

They knew they couldn't go back after coming so far, and there was no other way to go for they were climbing a steep hill on the island and the map said that the treasure was at the top. So they continued on very carefully and as they turned the bend they looked around the corner but Death

was not there, only a large pot. As they got closer, to their surprise, they found it was full of gold coins which could buy them all their hearts desires. The two companions were overjoyed and danced around saying "We've found the treasure, how clever we are." But the boy wasn't so sure, he thought back to the words of the person who had first told him of the map and it's treasure, about how it wouldn't be what you'd expect, that it would never run out and that it was not money. He also thought of the old man's warning to be careful of Death. When he said this to the companions they said that they didn't care and, if he didn't want it, they would divide it between themselves. However, to the boy's horror, as they tried to divide it up they started to fight, it got so bad that they rolled on the ground dangerously near a large ledge over which a steep drop lead down to the rocks below. The fight became so violent that they were unaware of their danger and, all of a sudden, both of them rolled over the edge. So it came to pass what the old man had said was right because they both met Death that day.

After seeing this, the boy, ran from the gold up the hill, staying closely on the path as the map told him to. As he got to the top of the hill he reached the spot where the map said that the writer of the map, and maker of the island, had met Death, been killed but survived. He looked around, it had become dark by now and started to rain. The boy looked down on the island and saw all the faint lights of the people running around doing their own thing without a thought for the treasure or caring to do anything about the map or it's writer. He thought how he had done the same for years and would still be doing so if he hadn't have been told of the wonder of the treasure. He realized how rebellious he had been, how he had followed Death's lies and even lied himself. How he had been a wandering child who would not listen and chose the wrong instead of the right. Then he noticed a grave in the darkness, it was marked with a cross (the same as on the map), but the grave looked as if it had been opened. It was then that he realized the truth about the Maker of the island and what had happened when He had met with Death. He started to cry, and as the rain mixed with his tears he new he didn't deserve the treasure. As he cried he felt a hand of comfort on his shoulder and he heard the voice of a Man. The person spoke to him and wiped his tears away. He told the boy that he had found the treasure and that, after climbing the hill, he needed to just sit down and rest. He gave him new clothes (the clothes the boy had seen the other people wearing). The Man also said that there was a way off the island away from Death and that he should not be afraid of Death anymore because of what had happened when the Man had met death, died and survived. Although he was told that he must stay here for a while and would still meet Death later. The Man also said that he would help him on his journey from now on and that all he had to do was ask. The Man explained that the way off the island was a boat that would take him to a beautiful place where Death no longer was. No one could survive the journey off the island without the clothes to protect them. One day, the Man said, he would remake the island and mix it with that beautiful place and Death would be no more.

The boy was very happy to have sought and found the treasure and he continued on with his new clothes and his new Friend looking forward to that new place.

