

Prime Youth 1 excerpt:

Prologue

Have you ever had a really vivid and clear dream, one that isn't foggy? I had one last night where I was on a sailboat in the middle of the sea. It was storming, and the waves were violently rocking the boat. I noticed that the inside of the boat never got wet. No matter how many waves crashed up and around me, the inside stayed perfectly dry.

Chapter 1

Hi, my name is Calvin Fritz. I'm different, but I embrace being different. I'm not that different from you, though. I try to be cool, stay up late doing homework, play video games, and daydream in class too much. Now, that may sound pretty normal, but have you ever had your life upended? Actually, that may have happened to some of you. OK, have you ever been on an adventure? Well, for some of you, looking through your fridge is an adventure. OK, let's say my life has been crazy, crazier than most people on their craziest day. I've gone through a lot, and I've had a lot happen to me, and I think it's time to tell that story. Oh yeah, one more thing. You may notice things that look like misprints throughout this story, but they aren't. Those are just some quirks people in this story have. I'll even tell you my quirk—I stutter. It's not a bad stutter, most of the time. If I do stutter, I repeat a word, or I get stuck in the middle of a word and repeat that part. Worst case, I may repeat a word or phrase three or four times. I'm not someone who repeats the word twenty times.

But that's too much backstory. You guys need more bang-bangs and pew-pews, with less blah-blah-blah. So let's begin where I realized I was in for more than I had signed up for.

I was daydreaming about my dream on the boat when I realized a flight attendant was talking to me.
"Excuse me, sir."
"Sorry, ma'am," I said, sitting up. "What can I do for you?"
"I was wondering where your parent is. It's almost time for liftoff." She pointed to the empty seat to my left.

"I'm not flying with my parents today."

"They're not flying with you? How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

"What will you be doing in Rhode Island?"

"I won a scholarship. So did my friend Thomas," I pointed to the same empty seat she had.

"What kind of scholarship? I haven't heard of one where you fly off alone halfway across the country."

"Indiana to Rhode Island isn't quite halfway across the country. It was advertised as a scholarship, but it's more like a study abroad, but domestic. I'm not sure of the proper term. But we get

to go to a school there for the summer and earn college credit."

"That sounds interesting. I'm guessing this is a rich kids' kind of scholarship, seeing as you're in first class?"

"I wouldn't say we're rich, but we didn't pay for this. It was included in the scholarship."

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"Really?" The flight attendant leaned against the chair in front of me. "Where did you sign up for it? I'd like my son and daughter to apply when they're old enough."

"Now, that's the cool part," I said, smiling and pushing my glasses up. "I didn't apply for it. I showed up to school one day and was told I had won. I was told I possess a set of very specific skills,

which I assume are my grades and whatever else the school keeps track of."

"Interesting." The flight attendant stood back up. "Well, enjoy your trip, and I hope your friend makes it in time."

"Thank you." I gave her a nod as she walked down the aisle.

Thomas had been right behind me when we went through security, but he was pulled aside when they checked his bags. They said it was a random check, which I didn't know they could do. I

really hoped they didn't keep him from making the flight.

It felt like I checked my watch every five seconds. I had a feeling he wasn't going to make it, but I hoped he would. Then a flight attendant closed the door and twisted the lock.