The Cage

STORY:

Alex woke up sweating. He had that that dream again. It always came to haunt him when he slept ever since his dad died. He always tried not think about it, but that caged world came back no matter how hard he tried. Looking at his clock, he saw it was just after midnight. He lay down, gazing at the ceiling, waiting for sleep to arrive.

"Alex! Breakfast's ready!" Mum shouted up from the bottom of the stairs. With a groan, he hauled himself out of bed and clomped down the stairs. He wolfed down his breakfast and ran to the door, grabing his schoolbag and books without slowing down. "Bye Mum! Bye Dozer!" Dozer thumped his tail lazily against the floor and did a half-hearted "woof".

As usual, he was late to school and got a dissaproving glance from his teacher. The day past by in a blur with all the english, maths and art merging into one another. That was another thing that had changed since his dad had died. He used to love learning, but now he didn't see the point. Who cared if you got good grades, and he couldn't see where algebra would be used in real life no matter how hard he tried.

When he got home, his mother asked him how his day had been with forced cheerfulness. He just grunted and went up to his room to play on his X-Box. Eventually, his mother came up "Time to go to bed now" Those words were the ones he hated most, as it meant having to endure the dream again. But this time was different. He decided that enough was enough. He was going to show this dream who was boss once and for all.

He found himself in that world of darkness again. But now, with him deciding to take control, he found he could actually walk around, like a nightmarish video game with him as the main character. He found the world to be a barren wasteland with no life. Just as he was about to sit down, he came upon a boy his age with rips and tears in his clothes. He seemed asleep, so Alex tried to creep around him, but then he sat up.

"Oh. A new one." The boy said before lying back down. "Wait!" I pleaded. "What is this place?". He just stared at me. I was about to walk away when he said "Fine. I guess you have right to know, because your stuck here too now." "Wait. What do you mean stuck?" "All of us here, we had someone important to us die. For me, it was my brother. Then we all get this dream, and we think we're so clever trying to fight it. But then we just get sucked up into it. Forever. We think someone put a kind of cage around this place, and now we can't get out. Oh, and the person who we think is responsible for this mess lives up there." He pointed to a castle with black clouds swirling around it. "So if you can get him to unlock this cage of his, you'd be doing us all a favour."

We talked for a bit, but by then I had made up my mind. I would talk to that guy in the castle and get him to unlock his stupid cage. I strode up to castle, but I couldn't see the boy smile and shake his head like he new something I didn't.

I walked up to the massive door of the castle and knocked. A massive voice seemed to come from all around me. "Come in". The doors opened inwards. I followed a hallway deeper into the castle. I eventually came to another massive door. I opened it. What I saw took me completely by surprise.

I had imagined a huge man with powerful muscles and maybe a sword, but instead I saw a middle aged man banging the ground and crying like he was a five year old having a tantrum. I decided to get to the heart of the matter quickly. "Sir, with all due respect, I have come here to tell you that you need to open your-" "Why should I?" he bawled. "I lost my dad when I was just a wee little lad, and things haven't been the same. My decision to lock myself away in this place is my decision, not yours!" "I know what it feels like to lose your dad." I said quietly. "Also, people are trapped here and can't get home."

"What?" he exclaimed. "I know nothing of this!" "Then please, for the sake of everyone here, please unlock your cage and let everyone go." "I guess I should." "Thank you." I said gratefully. The man pressed a button under his desk, and everything went black.

I woke up to my Mum calling my downstairs, but this time she didn't seem as unhappy. It was then that I realised that everything might be ok after all.