

## Part 1

### A Meeting with the Great Designer

Marcus and Waldo are twin brothers who live on a stormy island named Zephen. Today they are 18 years old and on their way to meet the Great Designer, the most important man on the island.

"Hello," says the Great Designer sitting at a large desk. He is a tall man with thick glasses and a friendly grandfatherly smile. "Have a seat. I have a special gift for you on your 18th birthdays." He hands each of them a giant piece of paper full of drawings that cover the whole desk. Marcus and Waldo look at the drawings the Great Designer has made.

"You know that our island is very windy and we get terrible hail and floods. These drawings are plans I made especially for each of you. They tell you how to build a house that will never fall down, even in the worst storm. You must do everything exactly as the plans tell you if you want a safe house to live in."

The Great Designer goes over the important parts of their plans and tells them to be sure to read all the little details. "Paying attention to the details is what will make the difference between your house standing up or falling down when a storm comes." The brothers listen closely and nod as he speaks. "If your house is still standing and you are safe inside after a terrible storm, you will become an important person on our island that others will look up to." He finishes, and shakes each of their hands as he walks them to the door.

"Oh! One more thing," says the Great Designer. "Our island's weather men have told us that this year is going to bring one of the worst storms we have seen in over 20 years. They call it 'The Big One'. So take extra care!"

Marcus and Waldo leave the office and talk excitedly about their special house plans and where they will build their homes. It will be the hardest work they have ever done, and each one will have to build their home all by themselves.

Can they do it? They are ready to try!

## Part 2

### The Perfect Spot

Marcus and Waldo hugged and said goodbye to each other. To become an important person on Zephen, they each had to build their own house by themselves. Since birth, they had been a team, doing hard work together. But today they parted, wishing each other good success.

Marcus sat next to the pilot in a small plane and looked down at all of Zephen. He began thinking of his home. "I will build the strongest house on the island that will keep me safe from the most powerful storms." He looked carefully at his special plans from the Great Designer for a clue as to where he should build. He read, "*Choose solid ground to build your house on. Choose a spot that will protect it from high winds and flood water.*"

As Marcus looked out the window, he saw a bare, brown field that was surrounded by mountains. "This is not very pretty, but it looks like it will keep me safe. I will build here."

The pilot landed on the empty field and Marcus stepped out. After he walked around the field, he said, "Yes, this will be the perfect spot."

Waldo was also in a plane looking for the best spot. "I want my home to stand high above the others. I want it to be more beautiful than all the homes on Zephen." He was hunting for a high mountain peak. And there it was!

"Take me over there!" Waldo pointed. The pilot landed on the top of the high mountain. On one side, Waldo could see the whales and dolphins jumping in the ocean, and on the other side, he could see the biggest city of Zephen which would light up at night. "This is the best spot on the island!" exclaimed Waldo. "Everyone will be able to see my house up here, and I will be able to see all of Zephen."

Waldo pulled out the special plans to see what the first building steps would be. "*Choose solid ground to build your house on. Choose a spot that will protect it from high winds and flood water.*" He realized his house would have to be extra strong to stand up during storms and high winds. "I can do it," he thought. "There's nowhere else on the island that I want to live. This is definitely the perfect spot."

### Part 3

## Close Enough or Exact: Does It Matter?

Marcus and Waldo had each found their perfect spot on which to build their houses. Now it was time to begin digging. Marcus climbed into the giant digging machine which scooped out huge shovels of dirt. He found it very hard to steer and kept making mistakes. The special plans of the Great Designer said that the hole had to be square and eight feet deep on each side, but every time Marcus checked to see if he had dug deep enough, it was always wrong. "I give up!" he shouted, angry and tired. He kicked a pile of dirt, but that only made more dirt fall back into the hole.

Marcus plopped down to the ground. After a few minutes of grumbling, he remembered the words of the Great Designer. "*You must do everything **exactly** as the plans tell you if you want a safe house to live in.*" Marcus' attitude changed when he remembered that this year a very powerful storm was coming, *The Big One*, and he wanted his house to be strong enough to keep him safe.

Marcus started digging again until it was way past dark. Finally, all the sides measured eight feet deep. He was so tired he didn't even eat dinner. He just crawled into his tent and immediately fell asleep.

Waldo didn't seem to be having any trouble at all with his digging machine. He loved how fast it could pull out the dirt and he scooped up bucket after bucket. He climbed out and walked around his square. He measured one side and it was eight feet deep. "This deserves a celebration!" He called the pilot to take him to the city where his friends lived.

During the ride, he opened his plans and read a detail he had missed the first time. "*You must do everything **exactly** as the plans tell you if you want a safe house to live in.*" Waldo had only measured one side of the big hole, not all four. "It all looked pretty good to me. I think it's close enough," he thought. So Waldo spent that evening having fun with his friends in the city.

## Part 4

### The Great Cover-Up

The big holes had been dug and now it was time for the concrete trucks to pour the basement. The trucks backed up to pour the thick mixture into the freshly dug foundations until it reached the correct height.

At Waldo's building site, the trucks stopped. A driver climbed out and said, "Something is wrong. We can't get the south end to fill. The sides must not all be eight feet deep." Waldo knew he had only measured one side and he thought he was close enough on the other sides. "Can you pour it anyway?" he asked. "Yes," the driver said, "but it won't be even so you'll have a weak foundation."

"There's no way I'm digging that again!" yelled Waldo. "Just pour it and I'll figure out a way to fix it." Waldo walked off mad.

At Marcus' site, the trucks finished pouring and a driver said to him, "Everything looks good here. Give it a week to dry, then you can start building." Marcus smiled. He was glad he had followed the instructions exactly even though it had taken so long.

At the end of the week, the brothers each received a note that their foundations must be checked by an inspector before they could continue. When the inspector arrived at Marcus' site, he looked over every detail. "Everything has been done correctly," he said. "It's even and ready to build on." Marcus thanked him then prepared for the next step.

When Waldo received the note, he became worried. His foundation was not done the way the Great Designer's plans had said. If the inspector noticed his errors, he would have to start over. He had to find a way to cover up the obvious droop on the south side where it had been dug too shallow.

He quickly mixed more concrete and shoveled it into the low side. He smoothed it out to make it appear even. Satisfied with his work, he relaxed.

The next day the inspector flew to Waldo's site.

"Hello," said Waldo a little nervously.

"I'm here to check your work," replied the inspector.

"I've followed the plans just as I was told," said Waldo.

When the inspector came to the south side, Waldo distracted him. "Isn't this a great view on this mountain top?" The inspector stopped to look, taking his eyes off the south side where Waldo had tried to cover it up. "Yes, however, the winds are strong up here. Better take extra care to make it sturdy. So far, everything appears to be in order."

When the inspector finally left, Waldo breathed a sigh of relief. He was very happy he didn't have to tear up his work and restart.

## Part 5

### Decisions, Decisions...Strong or Beautiful

It was time to build the walls of the house. Marcus and Waldo gathered all the wood they needed and started right away.

Waldo attached the first and most important bottom layer of boards to his concrete walls with long thick nails. But he only used a few of the nails on the side he had done the cover-up on. He followed the special plans from the Great Designer and made sure the rest of the bottom boards were nailed tightly in place. Then he started putting the high walls on top of the boards and in two days, all of the walls were up.

Marcus was also nailing boards down to his concrete walls. He used many thick nails on all of his sides since they were all strong and even. But when he was nailing in the last one, he heard a loud crack. The crack reached all the way to the bottom. Marcus had to cut out a part of the concrete wall and repour it. He was not happy because this was going to take many days. What if a big storm came before he finished his house? But if he wanted a strong house, he would have to fix it the right way.

While the concrete dried, Marcus put up all the other walls and he also read through all the special plans again. When the new concrete was ready, he worked extra long hours and got all the walls up.

Waldo was almost finished with his house. He went out to buy the last of the materials. The Great Designer said to use metal roofing and fiber cement siding. These materials would stay on even in very high winds. But Waldo thought they were ugly, so he decided to buy different roofing and siding that would make his house stand out and be as beautiful as he pictured it in his mind. Plus, they didn't cost as much.

"Is that what your plans call for?" asked the salesman.

"Yeah," muttered Waldo.

Soon after Waldo had left, Marcus came to the same store. The same salesman greeted him. "Weren't you just in here?" he asked.

"No. That was probably my twin brother. Did he buy metal roofing and fiber cement siding?"

"No. He got something cheaper. You want that, too?"

"No, that's not what the plans call for!"

Marcus paid for the right materials and immediately called Waldo.

"Waldo! Why are you buying the wrong stuff for your house?"

"What are you talking about?" replied Waldo.

"Waldo! I'm at the same store and the salesman told me what you bought. Those are not what the plans said to buy!" Marcus was worried.

"Marcus, I've got what I need, now leave me alone. My house will be fine."

Waldo hung up on Marcus and shut off his phone. Marcus tried to call back, but no one answered.

## Part 6

### Put to the Test

Marcus and Waldo worked quickly over the next few days to put on the roof and siding of their houses with the materials they had chosen.

When Waldo finished, he felt proud that he had the most beautiful home on the island of Zephen built upon a mountain peak.

When Marcus finished, he had many cuts on his hands from carrying sharp metal roofing pieces, but he felt happy that he had followed the plans perfectly. His house should outlast any storm.

And he was about to find out!

Marcus and Waldo each sat inside their homes enjoying their work. Suddenly, their phones sounded an alarm. "A giant storm is on its way! If your home is not safe, find shelter in the city NOW!" Marcus and Waldo listened carefully then went to their basements to wait for the storm to pass.

The wind began to howl and was getting stronger every minute. Hail the size of golf balls crashed onto the roofs. Could this be *The Big One*?

Waldo covered his ears, but he still heard the hail wrecking his roof, and when he looked out a window, he saw all the siding was peeling off of his house!

But the worst was still to come.

To his horror, he watched the south side of his basement wall crash to the ground. It was too weak to hold up. Waldo was scared to death! He crawled into a small closet under the stairs and shut himself in.

Marcus also sat in his basement. He knew he had followed every detail of the Great Designer's plan and felt sure his house would stand. But now his work was being put to the test. High speed winds blew against the house, but none were able to tear off his roof or his siding. The mountains around his home helped to protect it. Try as it might, the storm could not break down his house.

But Marcus was worried about Waldo. Would his house last through the wind and hail? Marcus had to wait through the night to find out.

By morning, the storm had passed. Marcus called for a plane to take him to Waldo's. While he waited, he noticed only a few dents on his house, but nothing else. His home proved to be stronger than the storm.

Marcus ran to the plane when it arrived. As it approached Waldo's home, he felt sick. All that remained standing was a small pile of wood with a staircase and closet under it. Heaps of wood and roofing were everywhere. As the plane landed, Marcus saw someone standing.

"Waldo! Thank God you're alive! Come on - let's get you cleaned up." Waldo slowly walked toward the plane, his face looking sad. He didn't say a word.

The plane flew back over the city to Marcus' home.

"Wow, did the storm even hit you?" asked Waldo as he glanced over Marcus' property.

"Yeah, and it was scary," replied Marcus. "But the Great Designer knows what it takes to build a strong house. I'm glad that HE is the Great Designer and not me!"

Waldo nodded silently as Marcus invited him inside.