

Eternal Bonds





KING'S SCHOOL

Eternal Bonds

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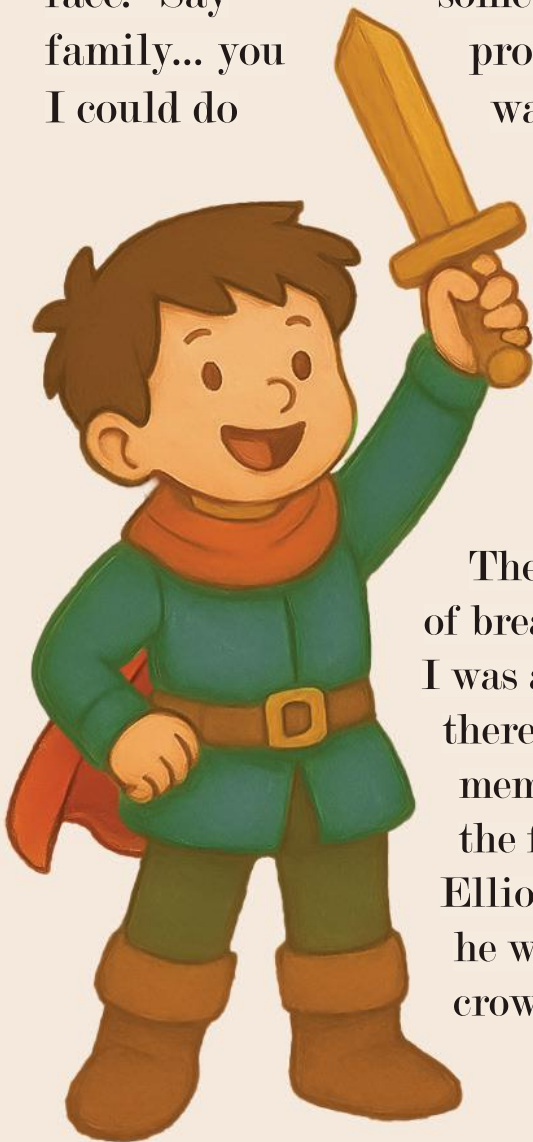
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Tragic Death

I never knew losing a cherished friend could be so heartbreaking, bringing me to the verge of tears. Everything happened so fast... But why? We could have lived so happily if only this hadn't happened. As I held a few apples in my arms, I wanted to surprise Elliot with some fruits. When I came home, I wore the biggest, happiest smile as I opened the door... But all I saw was my pale-looking friend lying on the floor, unconscious. The fruits slipped from my arms. This has to be a dream? No... I dashed straight to him and grabbed his hands. "Hey... hey, wake up!" I cried, tears streaming down my face. "Say something!!" "You promised we could be family... you promised you would never leave me..." All I could do was sob. I felt so helpless and hopeless.

There was no sign of breathing, and his hands were cold. "Maybe... just maybe if you hadn't ended up like your family... you wouldn't be like this too." "Please wake up... please, don't leave me."

There was no sign of a response... no sign of breathing... no sign of coming back. Now I was all alone; no matter how much I tried, there was no hope. As I mourned his passing, memories flooded back to me. I remembered the first time we met. It was when I saw Elliot picking flowers. As he held them, he wandered under a tree, making flower crowns.





He noticed me staring and came over, saying, “You’ve been staring at me, which is why I thought you needed one. So here, have it.” “Thank you,” I replied. After that, we introduced ourselves.

“What’s your name, buddy?” he asked. “My name is Elliot.” As we shared our names,



we began to talk and discovered we had so much in common. We both loved going on adventures, believed in fairytales, and grew closer, becoming like family. We were inseparable.

This world is filled with enchanting tales and magical stories. In this world, heroes exist, each possessing unique powers within them, saving the days of others. One night, as Elliot and I sat by the fire, he shared with me a fascinating realm, and we discussed it eagerly. “Crusoe, have you ever heard of ‘The Realm of Elysium?’” he asked.

“Nope, I’ve never heard of it. What is it about?” I replied.

“It’s a paradise,” he explained. “That paradise is fulfillment, containing everlasting bliss. It is a promised land.” I was captivated by the idea of such a place. “A promised land, you say? How wonderful could it be?”

A cartoon illustration of two young boys sitting on the grass at night, facing each other with a campfire between them. The boy on the left is wearing a green tunic with a brown scarf and a brown belt. The boy on the right is wearing a green tunic with a brown belt. They are both wearing brown boots. The background is a dark blue night sky filled with many small, bright stars and several fireflies. The ground is covered in green grass. A speech bubble from the boy on the right contains the text: "Crusoe, have you ever heard of The Realm of Elysium?".

Crusoe, have you
ever heard of The
Realm of Elysium?

“Is it possible to go there? I mean, if we could,” I wondered aloud.

Elliot responded, “If it does exist, why couldn’t we go? But we must face the dangers and opponents of this world. It isn’t as easy as we think. Heroes in this world must engage in daring battles and confront the conflicts that arise. Only by facing them will the gates of the realm open for you. And not only that, but you can also spend time with your loved ones.”

“Heroes... I wish I were one of them. Heh, funny how that slipped my mind... I will be a hero one day! I’ll save the people out there just like the legends do! I could be one!” I declared confidently.

Elliot giggled, “Hah... You might be one day.”

“Hey! I mean it!!” I insisted.

As we gazed up at the starry sky that night, the beauty was magnificent and dazzling. “Hey, Elliot.”

“Hm?” he replied.

“Will you promise me we can be family as brothers? And will you promise not to betray me and never leave me?”



I will be
a hero
one day!



Elliot stood up and said, "Crusoe, you have been my closest friend, and you always will be. I promise to stay as you say, like brothers forever. No matter how far apart we are, distance will never tear us apart. I will always be by your side."

"Elliot, you can't die. You promised you wouldn't leave me."

"Yes..." he coughed weakly. "We are family."

But his condition worsened. Here I was, tears streaming down my face, as he lay dead in my arms, leaving me feeling hopeless. "Oh, Elliot... Why couldn't you have stayed longer?"

"This won't be the end. No..."

"Elliot, I promise you that your final rest in peace will be in the realm of Elysium."

"Elliot, you can't die. You promised you wouldn't leave me."

"Yes..." he coughed weakly. "We are family."





Inception of Journey

After a long period of waiting, the time had finally come for Crusoe to embark on his first journey. He opened his eyes, ready to face the adventure that lay ahead. Fully prepared to become a hero— no ordinary hero, but a unique one, a ‘champion’ hero— he took his first step into the unknown. His goal was to discover the realm of Elysium, and he decided to start his quest in the ‘Kingdom of Wonders.’

As he made his way towards his destination, he was overwhelmed by the beauty around him. The sweeping panorama captivated him, with his eyes tracing the contours of the land and the vibrant colors of the sky. The anticipation of breathtaking views filled him with excitement: a crystal-clear sky, birds singing, rabbits hopping, and flowers blooming. Crusoe reveled in the environment, confidence swelling within him.

But soon, he stumbled upon a troubling scene. A group of men surrounded a young boy, who was pleading for mercy. “Let go of me! I’m not the right person you’re looking for; leave me alone!” he cried, desperation in his voice. “Having the audacity to shout at me?!” one of the men shouted back. “Know your place, you scum!” yelled another. The boy was terrified, calling out for help. Witnessing this, Crusoe rushed towards the men, knocking them out one by one. “Now scram!” he commanded, and the thugs, frightened, fled for their lives. The young boy remained on the ground, still in shock. Crusoe approached him gently. “Are you alright?”





KINGDOM
OF
WONDERS

The boy finally stood up, gratitude shining in his eyes. “Y- Yes! Thank you for saving me. I don’t know how to repay you.”

“It’s quite alright, you needn’t worry,” Crusoe reassured him.

“But if I may ask, do you know where the ‘Somniators’ is located?”

“Oh! That’s where I’m heading!”

“You can follow me, and we can chat along the way.”

“Very well then! That’s a great opportunity; I’m coming.”

As Crusoe and Florent walked together, they began to introduce themselves.

“I’m Florent,” the boy said first.

“I’m vbv!” he replied with enthusiasm.

“I also come from Somniators. My dream is to travel the world and face its challenges. But I just had a run-in with some bad guys, and I’m starting to lose hope.”

“Do not say that! If you believe you can achieve something, then you can! But yes, this world is filled with evil. If you’re one of the good guys, you can still achieve your dreams. Remember, the good guys always win.”



As Crusoe advised Florent, the boy took his words to heart and began to trust him. “You seem very brave, Crusoe. What are your hopes?”

“My hopes are to become a hero, find my friend in the afterworld, and bring peace and justice to the world.”

“I truly hope you achieve what you want.”

It was clear that Crusoe and Florent were becoming friends. As they continued on their journey, Crusoe asked about Somniators.

Florent replied, “It’s a kingdom of dreamers, filled with good hopes and dreamers. The kingdom is ruled by her majesty, ‘Somnium,’ and her benevolence. The people are loyal to her, and she is loyal to her people in return. But if her majesty stops ruling and enforcing good laws, then her people will stop having good ‘dreams’ as well. If we, the people, stop obeying her, we might never see the light of day again. Our job is very simple: remain loyal and protect each other.”

As Florent spoke about Somniators, they grew tired and decided to stop at a campsite.



“Florent, I’m very glad to have met you,” Crusoe said.

“So am I,” replied Florent. “Now then, rest well, because our next destination is The Somniators.”



The Kingdom of Dreamers

The Somniators is a realm ruled by a queen named 'Somnium.' This kingdom is truly befitting of such a royal figure. She is a sovereign queen who demands respect and commands authority from all in her court. Her people are deeply loyal and faithful to her. Somniator is an enchanting and charming place, featuring an enormous castle and breathtaking scenes throughout the kingdom. Special occasions are celebrated here, and as you wander through the streets, you'll find well-maintained paths adorned with a variety of blooming plants and flowers.

Crusoe and Florent arrived in Somniator. As they entered the kingdom, Crusoe was mesmerized by the sights and scenery. It was such a marvelous place that he could hardly take his eyes off it. Florent led him through the various venues, introducing him to his friends along the way. After exploring, they decided to eat at a restaurant, where they sat and chatted.

"What do you think of Somniator so far?" Florent asked.

"It is quite amazing! I admire the scenery here," Crusoe replied.

"Glad to hear that! However, did you know that a ballroom will be held at her majesty's palace?" Florent said.



“My oh my, a ballroom?” Crusoe questioned, surprised.

“Yes! The ballroom will start in the evening, where we will celebrate a special occasion at the castle. People will dance around the room and enjoy a grand feast!”

“But what occasion?”

“Every four years, we celebrate our loyalty to her majesty with all due respect. Unfortunately, during the last celebration, an incident occurred.”

“What happened?”

“At the last occasion, her majesty was about to receive a luxurious necklace. The necklace was kept in a location that was difficult for people to access, guarded by soldiers. But right before it was presented to the queen, it disappeared. We also found out that the soldiers were injured, which means someone must have harmed them before stealing the necklace. To this day, its whereabouts remain unknown.”

“That is a great pity to lose such a precious thing.”

**My oh my,
a ballroom?**





“However, the queen didn’t seem to mind. She said that what mattered most was celebrating with her people.”

“I’m really looking forward to going to the ballroom; I will be seeing her for the first time.”

“So am I! But we better dress fancy for such an occasion.”

“Obviously! What did you expect us to wear? Clown costumes?”

Florent laughed. “I was just joking.” Crusoe had a plan in mind; if he had the opportunity to see the queen, he would ask her about that paradise.

In past decades, the kingdoms had fought in wars over the realm of Elysium. Only the kingdom that won the war had the ability to enter that realm and know its location. Eventually, the Somniators won the war, and it seems that only the ruler of the kingdom knows where it is. Crusoe and Florent were preparing three nights before the ballroom for the feast that everyone would participate in during this amazing occasion.



The Feast

The day had finally come. It was time to head to the palace and witness the glory that awaited them. Crusoe and Florent were dressed in their finest attire, feeling thrilled about the ballroom and the special occasion of the feast. “Are you ready, my friend?” said Florent. “I’ve been waiting for this moment, so what are we waiting for?” Crusoe replied with a delighted tone. “Then let us head off!”

As they took their first steps into the ballroom, they were breathless. Crusoe was mesmerized. Crystal chandeliers spiraled down from the arching blue sky ceiling, illuminating the glimmering golden walls and a floor so polished it looked like glass. It wasn’t just the ballroom that dazzled; the women sparkled like a box of jewels, shades of emerald and ruby swirling and swaying around them, their unique masks adding to the allure. They glanced down at their simple black suits, feeling slightly out of place.



As they watched the people dancing to the music played by the piano and cellos, the rhythm flowed through the room. The tables were filled with delectable food, and Crusoe and Florent savored every moment. They were glad to be part of such a delightful occasion. “Are you enjoying your time, Crusoe?” “Yes, indeed I am. I feel very fortunate to be here and to enjoy every moment of it.” “So am I; I’m glad you’re happy.”



“Also, I’ve heard that the queen will appear tonight, and they will present her with a crown.” “A crown, you say?” “Yes, a crown for all her leadership and ruling over the kingdom.”

Not a moment later, the music ceased, and everyone stopped dancing. “Attention! Attention, everyone!” called out one of the queen’s courtiers. All eyes turned towards him. “We have gathered here to honor the occasion set forth by our majesty, which has brought joy and happiness to this kingdom. Therefore, I ask you all to pay your respects to her majesty.”

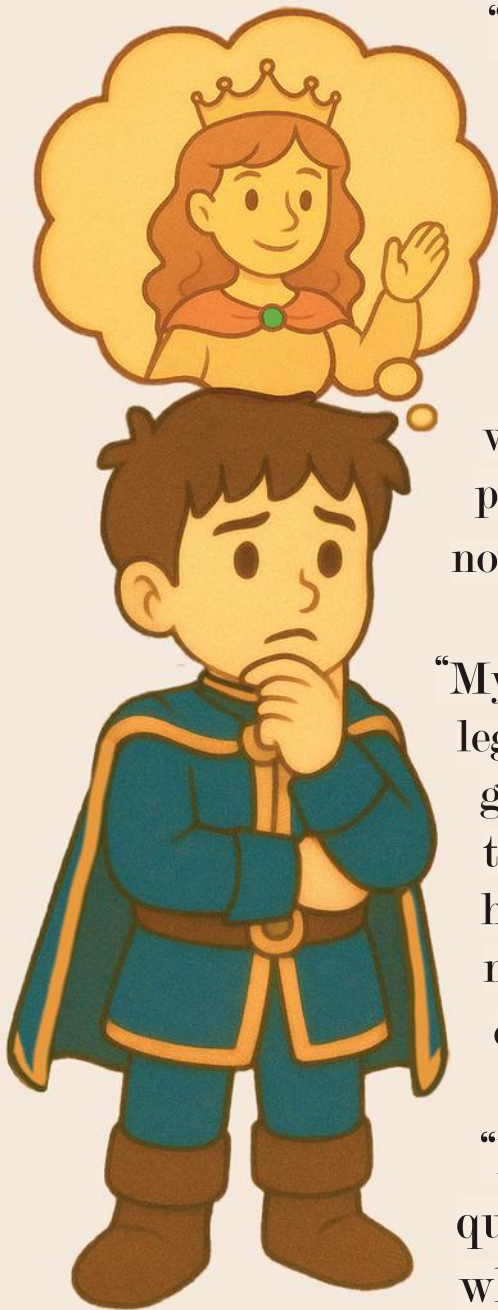
At that moment, the queen entered the room, holding her head high. Everyone bowed in reverence, showing the respect she commanded. What a majestic queen she was, always considering what was best for her people. Her dignified presence radiated responsibility. The stately queen surveyed her subjects and spoke, “My dear people, many years have passed, and yet we continue to live joyful lives. However,

we have also endured the misery of war. But we must not accept defeat! Therefore, I declare that we shall celebrate our victory and enjoy this feast!” As she spoke, her people erupted in joy, showing their respect and chanting, “Glory to her majesty Somnium!!”



Attention!
Attention,
everyone.





“What do you think of her, Crusoe?”

“I think she is a very loyal and great queen for her people, who also managed to take her position and rule over the kingdom after the war. But I must say, Florent, after she was granted the realm, why does nobody talk about it? Or help her people see their lost loved ones?” He was now very curious.

“My friend, people think it’s a myth, but legends say it actually exists, and they have gone there. But don’t worry, you will get to see it one day soon.” Crusoe felt neither happy nor sad; he thought his journey might be in vain, but a hero mustn’t give up on their dreams.

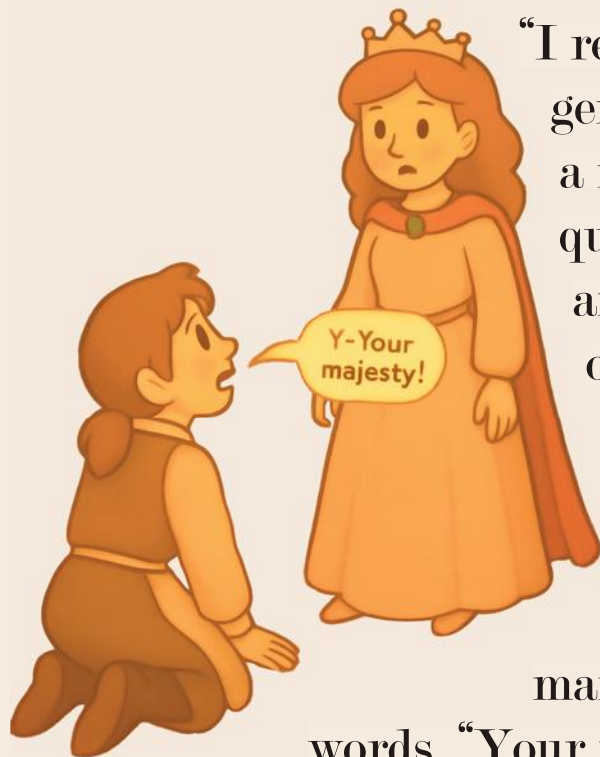
“Dear people!” announced one of the queen’s loyal servants, named Rossem, who oversaw the palace. “We will be presenting her majesty with a crown at any moment now.”

“A crown, huh?” asked one of the gentlemen. “That crown the commander will give the queen is indeed precious.”

“Right, but what’s so special about it?”

“Oh, I must say, the crown has been passed down from her great-great-grandmother. It has been in the family for many years.”





“I realize it now,” said the gentleman. Out of nowhere, a maidservant rushed to the queen, panicking and panting, and fell to the floor in front of her. “Y-Your majesty!” The queen looked down at her with a bewildered expression.

“Yes, Adelyn?” The maidservant was at a loss for words. “Your majesty, I...” Her heartbeat raced. “I-I am afraid that the crown has gone missing...” she cried. The queen fell silent for a moment, feeling skeptical about her maidservant’s words.

“But I thought the crown was concealed in a chamber, and surely there were guards overseeing it. It would be very hard for anyone to access it, wouldn’t it, Adelyn?” The maidservant looked at her queen apprehensively.

“Your majesty... you must believe me. It was ‘the fair lady’ who stole the crown, disguised herself, accessed the chamber, and took the crown.” The queen was shocked to hear those words.

“Guards!!” called out the queen. The guards came to her quickly. “Yes, your majesty!”

“Seal the exits; nobody is allowed to enter or leave.” The guards immediately went to carry out her orders.



The queen feared that the fair lady would unleash a catastrophe and impending disaster, endangering her people. As the guards sealed the doors, everyone grew curious and began chattering. They were trapped inside the dome, with no way in or out.

“What is going on? Why have they sealed the exit?” Crusoe asked, puzzled.

“I’m not quite sure...”

As the commander rushed to the queen, he said, “Your majesty! I-I am afraid that—”

“I am well aware, Noah,” she interrupted.

“Your people are in danger. We must proceed with caution and alert them before it gets any worse, your majesty.”

“I believe the guards should protect the people. You and Rossem should search for the fair lady and confront her while I stay here to protect my people.”

“I understand,” said the commander. He and Rossem left the dome to begin their search for the fair lady.



When the queen reappeared, the crowd began to question her out of curiosity.

“Your majesty,” said one of the gentlemen, “why have the doors been sealed? Why can’t we get out?” Soon, everyone was questioning her. The dome filled with unpleasant words and a cacophony of voices.



“Silence!” the queen shouted. Suddenly, everyone fell silent. She had no choice but to explain the situation. The people grew frightened as the queen informed them that she had sent the commander and Rossem to confront

the villain. But it was too late. The villain had already knocked them out and was now on her way to the dome.

As the queen tried to instruct the people on what to do, the glass ceiling of the dome suddenly shattered into pieces. Panic erupted, and everyone screamed, too terrified to move. For it was none other than the fair lady herself.





The Fair Lady

The Fair Lady, the one who shall not be named. The one that everyone feared. The crowd exclaimed and then fell suddenly into stunned silence. What stood on the staircase was no ordinary presence. It was the evil lady, the brutal one, and the Fair Lady. Her image was one of grim dignity, and thus, though she was the most wanted criminal, no one dared to move when she appeared.

Surely, the queen had gone completely mad to allow the Fair Lady to make her entrance in such an irrelevant manner. “Well... Well, I must say we meet again, Somnium,” said the Fair Lady. The queen looked at her with a mixture of insanity and confusion, not knowing how to deal with her— yet not now.

“You’re not welcome here,” said the queen firmly.

What did you do to them?!” The queen was filled with indignation.

“My, my, these fools... I’m quite surprised that your very loyal guards couldn’t beat me. How disappointing. I suggest that they should train harder next time, or who knows... they might never see the light of day again.”

“For what and why are you here?” The queen demanded.



The villain giggled and said, “Oh, you’re so naïve it kills me! Well... of course, I came here for your beautiful crown. Sooner or later, I will be the one taking over your place, and therefore, I shall rule this kingdom. Oh... yes, I will.”

“You will never become queen, nor are you a part of our citizenry. Beauty is a waste when the person has no taste,” said the queen.

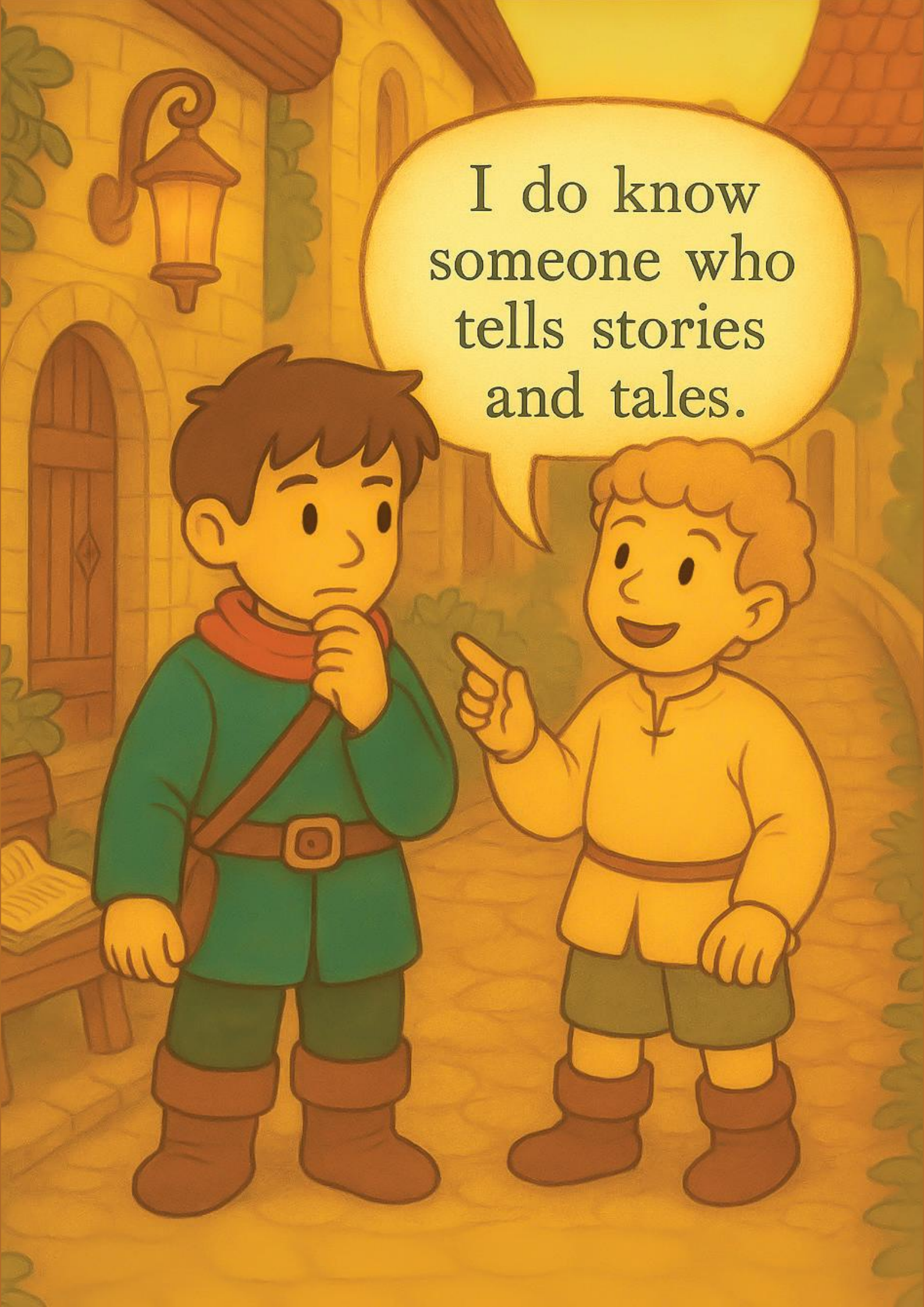
“Tch... Don’t you dare talk back to me,” the Fair Lady retorted. “Now, now, I must get going before it’s too late for the dear guards to find me.”

“Farewell~” giggled the Fair Lady as she left without a trace.

After that, the queen concluded the feast due to the injuries and damage caused by the Fair Lady. That night, a terror gripped the hearts of the people. The next day, everyone was talking about what had happened the night before, and it was reported in the newspapers. As Crusoe and Florent overheard the discussions, they began to talk about it themselves.

“Why would she call herself ‘the Fair Lady’?” Crusoe asked.

“I’m not sure... but I do know someone who tells stories and tales. Let’s go to her,” Florent replied.



I do know
someone who
tells stories
and tales.



As they made their way to the library, they entered a grand example of architecture, with majestic marble columns, intricate frescoes adorning the ceiling, and rows of beautifully bound books. The table between them was studded with readers of all ages and backgrounds.

“This place is enormous... yet so quiet,” said Florent, surprised.

“She might be here, somewhere around,” Crusoe suggested.

They finally caught up to her. She was an old, mysterious lady, wearing a long, flowing robe that seemed to absorb the light, leaving her face shrouded in darkness. Her hands were clasped around a gnarled wooden cane, the only obvious sign of her old age.

“Ah, young ones,” the old lady crooned, peering at Crusoe and Florent through their eyes. “You seek the secrets of the Fair Lady, do you?”

“I suppose she is talking to us, right?” Crusoe asked.

“Yes, you silly!” said Florent.

AH, YOUNG ONES
*YOU SEEK THE
SECRETS OF THE FAIR
LADY,
DO YOU?*



“Many have wondered about her past, but few have truly seen. Come, sit, and I shall tell you the untold story of her past,” the old mysterious lady said. Then she began her tale.



“In the old city of Somniator, there was a fair maiden. The city squares were adorned with her song, but nobody knew her family. Some say perhaps she ran away; nevertheless, she was loved by a young knight, and she loved him in return.”

“Then what happened after that?” asked Florent.

“Alas! Peace was not meant to be eternal. While the maiden was away, calamity descended. A horde of enemies and monsters drowned the city in blood during the war. The fallen knight, in his final moments, longed to hear her sing once more. And eventually, upon her return, she wept and wept until her voice and tears ran dry.”



“Robbed once, she swore to use all the ‘flame’s power’ to burn away the world’s evil.” Crusoe and Florent sat in stunned silence, the weight of the story settling over them like a heavy blanket. “That’s very tragic for someone...” said Crusoe. But that was not the end. The old mysterious lady continued, “Along the path of inferno, she ignited a strange man who appeared. ‘Dear me... at this rate, you will burn yourself out... literally. If you too are not a fan of the ruler, perhaps we can strike a deal?’ The man led her to a fidget throne under the cold gaze of its ruler, who uttered these words: ‘Sorry... to have your shoulder bear the grievances of this world... Since you could withstand my bitter cold, do you desire to burn? Then burn away the old and evil world for me.’”

“This is the tale of the Fair Lady.” As the mysterious old lady finished recounting the villain’s tragic backstory, Florent spoke up, “I never knew; I always thought she was just evil for the sake of being evil.” Crusoe nodded slowly. The old mysterious lady watched them with a knowing look, her eyes filled with a mix of sorrow and wisdom. “Sometimes,” she said, her voice barely more than a sigh, “life doesn’t give us a choice. It simply pushes us down a path, and we do what we must to survive.”

Crusoe stood up, his expression earnest. His voice filled with gratitude, he and Florent thanked the old lady. With that, they bid her farewell. As they walked away, Crusoe turned around, and to his surprise, she had already disappeared.





Duel

Days passed by as life gradually returned to normal after the recent events. Crusoe and Florent wandered the streets, having heard tales of the fair lady. Determined to reach the queen and learn more about the realm of Elysium, they devised a plan. They knew gaining an audience with the queen would not be easy, but they were prepared to face whatever challenges lay ahead. As they made their way through the bustling streets of the kingdom, they noticed a commotion up ahead. Curious, they quickened their pace and soon found themselves amidst a crowd gathered in front of two soldiers. The soldiers stood tall as they unfurled a parchment letter emblazoned with the queen's seal. Florent and Crusoe strained to hear as one of the soldiers began to read aloud, his voice carrying over the murmurs of the crowd.

“By decree of her majesty Queen Somnium,” the soldier announced, “it has been decreed that the fair lady is willing to engage in a duel with anyone who dares to challenge her. For whoever fights and emerges victorious, great rewards will be granted, along with whatever they desire, promised by the queen herself.” As soon as they heard the soldier's words, an idea crossed Crusoe's mind. He turned to Florent and declared, “I'm going to battle the fair lady.”

BY DECREE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN SOMNIUM

"IT HAS BEEN DECREED THAT THE FAIR LADY IS WILLING TO ENGAGE IN A DUEL WITH ANYONE WHO DARES TO CHALLENGE HER. FOR WHOEVER FIGHTS AND EMERGES VICTORIOUS, GREAT REWARDS WILL BE GRANTED, ALONG WITH WHATEVER THEY DESIRE, PROMISED BY THE QUEEN HERSELF."





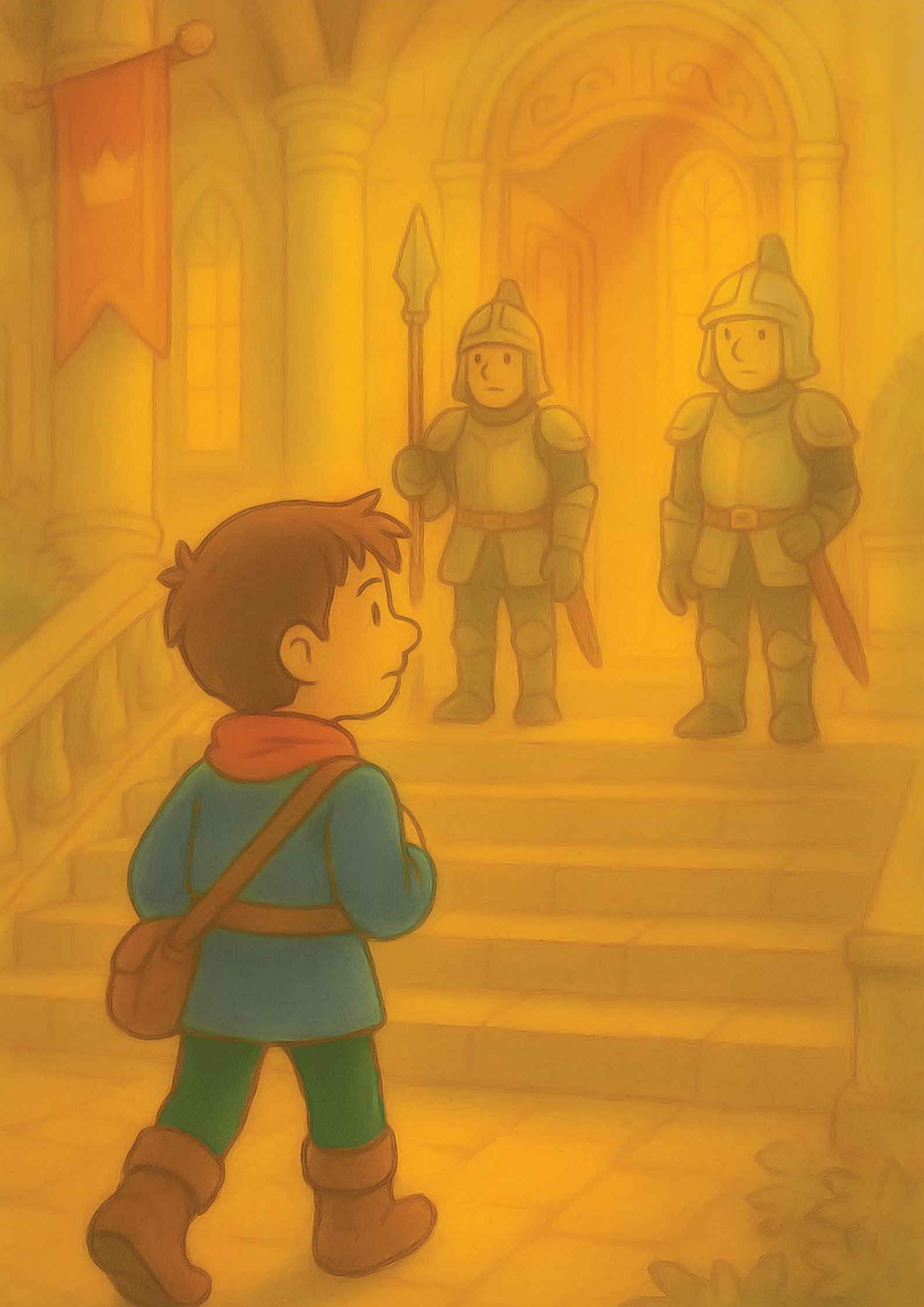
Florent was taken aback by his statement.

“But... the fair lady is strong enough to defeat you. Do you really want to do this?”

It only requires some time to practice and get stronger, and when I finally win, I won't need any reward. All I want is for the queen to send me to the realm as my prize.” As soon as Florent heard this, he hesitated to discourage his friend from fighting the formidable opponent. “It seems you have made up your mind. Very well then, I hope you claim victory and succeed.”

Crusoe smiled and replied, “Thank you, friend.”

As Crusoe made up his mind, he planned to meet the queen and inform her that he would be battling the fair lady. As he entered the palace, the sound of his footsteps echoed through the hallway. Finally, they stopped at the queen's door. Crusoe's hands trembled with nerves. The soldiers opened the door slowly. Once it was ajar, they entered the room and saw the queen standing by the window. Without hesitation, they bowed to her. The queen nodded slowly with a smile and finally spoke, “What brings you gentlemen here?”



“Your majesty, you informed the people that whoever dares to duel with the fair lady shall be rewarded as they win. And I, for one, am going to battle her.”

The queen stood up and said, “This is a good opportunity. The people in my kingdom will consider you their savior, their hero. For years, that lady has been quite troublesome for my people, and she has caused me to lose loyal members of this palace. I once planned that if anyone could vanquish her from my kingdom, that person would be rewarded with their heart’s desire.” The queen and Crusoe agreed on the deal. But just before Crusoe had to leave, he questioned the queen, expressing his curiosity about the fair lady.

“If I may ask, why won’t you agree to duel the fair lady yourself?” The queen’s expression changed as she replied, “I may be strong, but I have sworn a promise to her that if I fight, she will cause damage to my people and homeland. No sacrifice shall be in vain.” Crusoe understood her reluctance to engage in battle.

“But what purpose does she have in all this? I understand that she is evil, but no one becomes evil without a reason,” he inquired.



“People say she may have lost a family member or a lover, but... she is willing to take my position to enter a realm of paradise...”

As soon as Crusoe heard that, a spark of excitement ignited within him, but he quickly tempered his enthusiasm, knowing it would take time and practice to grow strong enough to face the villain. “I’m looking forward to your victory. As long as you succeed, there will be a joyful ceremony,” said the queen. “This is where we say goodbye. Farewell.”



As Crusoe left the palace, he pondered whether the villain shared his desire to reach the realm. He resolved to learn more about her after the duel. It was life or death in his hands. Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months. Gradually, Crusoe practiced for hours, mastering hand-to-hand combat, as well as sword and shield techniques. He grew stronger, preparing for the duel against the fair lady. Finally, the day he had been waiting for arrived—he was ready to confront evil and throw himself into battle with the fair lady.



The End

Finally, the day of battle had come. Crusoe was armed with his enchanted sword, fueled by determination. He had trained tirelessly for this moment. The people were eager to see him return victorious, but for Crusoe, it was a matter of life or death. As he prepared, donning his armor and gripping his shield and sword, Florent appeared. His expression was somber, and he said, “Crusoe, please win the battle... I’m afraid of losing a friend like you.”

Crusoe chuckled, “I’m not dying today.” He felt a surge of confidence, convinced that victory was within his grasp. “Do not worry, my friend. I promise I will return, and you will see me again.” They embraced, and Crusoe bid him farewell. As he left the room, a nagging thought crossed his mind— what if he couldn’t keep that promise? What if this was their last goodbye?

Stepping outside, Crusoe was met with cheers from the crowd, their joyful calls ringing in his ears. He took in the faces of the people, the blooming flowers, the singing birds, and the children at play, savoring the beauty of the world before the battle. He walked on until he reached the site of his duel with the fair lady. Before him stood an old, crumbled palace, a shadow of its former glory. As he approached, the fair lady turned to face him. “You’ve kept me waiting long enough, boy,” she said. “If I hadn’t known the queen sent you here to fight me, it would’ve been much more fun if she had fought me herself.” She laughed, her voice echoing in the ruins. “She must be weak, wouldn’t you agree?” Crusoe stood still, ready to face the challenge ahead.



“Oh, why so eager now?” she laughed maniacally. “Then I’m willing to share my dance with you! Till death do us part!” In an instant, she vanished using her magical curse powers and reappeared right in front of him, drawing her sword to attack. Crusoe quickly defended himself, parrying her strikes with his own sword. Each swing of her blade was infused with dark sorcery, but Crusoe stood resolute, determined to rid her of the malevolent influence that had consumed her. They fought fiercely, both exhausted but driven by the need to end the other. In a moment of opportunity, Crusoe managed to graze her arm with his sword, drawing blood from her shoulder. “How could you! You’re going to pay for that!” she screamed, retaliating with renewed fury. “By tonight, I’m going to—” But before she could finish her threat, Crusoe swung his sword at her knee, causing her to collapse with a gasp. He pointed his sword at her face and declared, “Any last words... you may surrender.”

The fair lady looked up at him, shock evident in her eyes as she averted her gaze, realizing death was looming over



her. “What is your purpose in doing this? What does it have to do with taking over the queen’s place?” Crusoe pressed. She hesitated before meeting his gaze, revealing her past. “Decades ago, I lost my parents to illness... they were always coughing, and eventually, they passed away. I had a little brother who adored fairytales. He was too young to suffer like that... I feared losing him too, so I left him.”

Oh, why so eager now?
'Then I'm willing to share
my dance with you!



Crusoe stood in stunned silence, realizing the identity of the fair lady before him. She was none other than Elliot's sister. Rage boiled within him at the thought of an older sister allowing her little brother to suffer so easily.

“And I came here as a maiden,” she confessed, her voice trembling. “I found a lover, but he died during the war. I wept endlessly, and in my grief, I lost my sanity. I began to kill those

who fought alongside my lover. Eventually, I became one of the evil ones, seeking to burn the old world to ashes.” A tear rolled down her cheek as she finished her tale. Crusoe felt a mix of anger and pity for both her and Elliot. “I wanted to take the queen's place so I could cross into the realm and see my loved ones once more. I'm so sorry.”

In a moment of madness, Crusoe replied, “I'm sorry you've had to bear such sorrow. I know what it feels like to lose someone dear.” With a heavy heart, he hoped she would find peace and reunite with her lover in the afterlife. In the end, he ended her suffering. As the rain began to fall lightly, he turned to leave, knowing he had claimed victory, albeit through a shocking duel.



The townspeople celebrated his triumph, joyfully calling his name as fireworks lit up the night sky. Florent rushed to embrace him, relieved that his friend had returned safely. Crusoe entered the palace, where the queen presented him with a golden sword as a token of his victory. “No more evil, no more trouble, no more chaos,” he thought, feeling a sense of closure. After the ceremony, the queen approached him. “As promised, I will grant you anything you wish for,” she said. Crusoe took a deep breath and replied, “I wish to be taken to the realm of Elysium.” He gazed at her, anticipation building within him.

As he faced the wind, it was so strong that he had to cover his eyes. Once the wind subsided, Crusoe opened his eyes to find himself not with the queen but in paradise. He was mesmerized by the sight before him; colorful auroras danced across the night sky. When he looked at his reflection in the lake, he realized he was no longer wearing armor—he appeared as a young boy again, recalling the first time he met Elliot.

He spotted a tree with a boy sitting beneath it; it was

Elliot. Crusoe rushed over and embraced him tightly, both missing each other dearly. Tears of happiness streamed down Crusoe’s face as they talked for hours, laughing and sharing their joy. However, the time came for Crusoe to leave. “Before I go, you will always remember me... right?” he asked.

Elliot giggled and replied, “You’ve truly become a hero, a mystical one. I will always remember you, just as you remember me.”

THE END





Eternal Bonds

In a breathtaking turn of fate, Crusoe is swept away to a paradise where he is transformed back into his youthful self. There, he reunites with his long-lost friend, Elliot, under a majestic tree. As they embrace, the two friends reminisce about their past, sharing laughter and tears in a heartfelt reunion. But as the time comes for Crusoe to depart, he fears being forgotten. Elliot reassures him that he will always hold their memories close, recognizing Crusoe as a true hero. Join Crusoe on this enchanting journey of friendship, nostalgia, and the timeless bonds that never fade.

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