

THE SWORD IN THE STONE

I left home in search of my fortune. I walked through a dark wood and came upon a rocky hilltop in the middle of no place in particular.

I stopped to have lunch so I cut a slice of bread and broke off a chunk of cheese. I breathed in prosperity.

That night I slept outdoors for the first time in my life. Mother packed a warm wool blanket for me and I made a pillow from pine branches.

The bright half moon smiled from the open skies. I took this as good fortune for what the future held.

I woke in the morning damp with a chill. My cheese was covered with ants and a beautiful red robin ate the bread.

My face was sticky and itchy from the pine pillow that smelled so fragrant last night. I knew that these were the first of many hardships I would encounter.

At noon I stopped on a cobblestone wall to eat an apple. A gust of wind came in from the east and blew the yellow cap from my head.

It flew past the nearby pasture and into a small wood. I ran, chasing after it. My hat had landed on the handle of a sword plunged into a large gray rock.

This reminded me of a story father told when he wanted me to go to sleep.

A magnificent sword was magically wedged into a rock and only the worthy would be able to remove it.

I was surprised by how well informed my father was, mostly he told tales of fantasy and myths of strong men.

I dusted off my cap and sat down besides the magic sword and stone. I did not want to stay long as this area was known as the Valley of Wolves.

I was frightened and not sure how to get back to the path. I built a small fire to get warm and to warn off the wolves to not come near and eat me.

I looked at the sword and did not feel comfort. I wondered how someone like me could find the Sword in the Stone in this valley?

If this was my fortune I did not feel very fortunate. Even if I could free the sword from it's setting, I did not know how to use the silly thing.

I decided to give it a try, even though I might fail. Who would I be if abandoned my adventure and not test my worthiness at the magic sword?

Slowly I approached the Sword in the Stone I gave a tug, then another and another.

I heaved, pulled and clenched my teeth. I pulled and hauled, jerked, plucked, tugged, wrenched, yanked, towed, hitched, twitched, grabbed, and snatched.

Then with one last shove and a loud thud, it moved!

The sword began to jiggle and loosen. I slowly slid it out of its rock. It was very heavy but with one last heave I lifted it and held it over my head.

Triumph! I felt that blast of victory that only hard work brings!

I wandered back to the footpath without a care. No wolf would dare bother someone with a sword.

I walked and walked with that heavy sword dragging behind me until I found my way to a large castle.

I presented the doorman with the sword. I told him to bring it to his master and I would meet with him at his leisure.

I waited for a very long time. When the doorman returned he was with four very large men. I was worried, but I stood tall.

I told them of my journey and how I plucked this sword from its magic stone. I was here to present it to the lord of this castle in hopes of finding a place in his employ.

It was then the five men began to laugh. I discovered I had not found the lost sword in the stone; I had broken a piece of art.

The landlord had purchased the Sword in the Stone from a local sculptor to decorate his woods. Fortunately he was not angry that I destroyed it.

He told me to write home to my mother and assure her that I was safe. And my hard work would pay off the damages in a few years.

My dreams had come true, I was so happy. I had found my fortune in a broken sword and a nice place to work.