

Two Paths

There was once a band of travelers searching for wealth. They had no home and did not need one, for they took refuge in whatever household or shelter they could find: in family houses, abandoned barns, empty caves, and gigantic castles. They had been doing so for quite some time and took pride in their lives, seeing their strange paths as adventures-always exciting, always ending somewhere.

They often saw many strange people and creatures, such as wild, three-eyed boars, color-changing flowers, and beehives the size of houses. This was exactly what happened one day, as they were walking through the misty mountains. Out of the fog came a strange man, dressed in all black with a mysterious air about him.

The man gave them no name, but insisted that they come with him, for he knew where the men could find what they searched for. Nearly all went with him, except for their leader, Mr. Oheir. Oheir was a very cunning man and deemed that whoever this was, it was not someone he wished to follow.

The two groups split ways, with Oheir choosing to head west, and the others east. The paths were nearly opposite, as Oheir saw lands filled with culture and knowledge, while the others saw no life but that of nature. Both saw magnificent things, with Oheir seeing everything the humans could do, from incredible buildings to beautiful pieces of art, and his fellow companions everything natural from the highest mountains to the lowest valleys.

After several years, however, something strange began to happen. Instead of the wild and incomprehensible wonders that the two groups saw, the landscape for them began to even out, becoming tamer, almost bland.

As the groups came nearer to finishing their long journeys across the world, the lands around them began to look the same. They saw the same mountains, suffered the same storms, and gazed at the same stars. Finally, as if by a work of magic, they came to see each other again.

Though the rest of the men did not know this and never would, the man they had come across in the mountains had always known that they would reconvene but did not know when. Now that they had, he knew exactly what would happen next.

The group stopped not far from where Oheir was heading, and the man told the rest that they had finally arrived. As he said so, riches began to rain from the sky. There was everything a man could want: gold coins, precious jewels, and valuable stones. Such a phenomenon, however, could not last long, and the rain stopped almost as suddenly as it had begun. The men at once grabbed for what they believed was theirs, but a barrier appeared that allowed no one to pass. “You men do not deserve this wealth,” the strange man told them. “You followed me out of greed, not caring who I was, but what I promised. Men who lust so are not worthy of getting what they want.

“One man, however, does deserve this. He trusted that he will get what he deserves, even if it is not what I offered. He is selfless and humble. It just so happens that he is here now.”

Without knowing, Oheir, who was simply continuing his journey, walked directly into the clearing upon which the group had stopped. He gaped and stared in wonder at the massive heaps of wealth he had just ‘stumbled upon.’ The others gasped when they saw him, as if they couldn’t believe that Oheir was the one the man was talking about.

Along with the riches, a horse and buggy appeared beside everything else. “This will help you transport your wealth,” the man said. Oheir took what was his and left to find himself a new life, while the rest continued with nothing valuable except an important life lesson.