

It was a small country. No walls were visible and it seemed that the only thing separating them from the outside world was an old wooden fence which ran across its borders. It was comprised of a dozen houses spread evenly out. A large farm could be seen towards the edge of the country, surrounded by several huts.

Rauher approached an opening in the fence where the gate had been left open. A single guard stood watch.

"Good evening, I'm just a traveler passing by. Would you mind if I stocked up on supplies? I could do with some food too," said Rauher.

The guard was young, he looked as if he was in his mid twenties. He wore a plaid open shirt and appeared to be chewing on a piece of straw.

"Oh, sure, follow me."

The young guard lead Rauher through the gate and they soon reached a collection of houses.

"Do you get many travelers? You seem pretty relaxed around here."

"Yes, we get a couple every week. It's quite a long travel until the next town, so it's not uncommon to get travelers asking for supplies."

"I see. So are you the only guard around here?"

"Guard?" he replied quizzically, "I'm no guard, I'm just helping out by watching the gate. I'm actually the chief's son."

"Oh, I'm sorry. I had no idea."

"Say, why don't you eat with us? Perhaps you could tell us a story or two while you're at it."

"That's very kind of you, I'll accept."

The young man lead Rauher into a large house, considerably larger than any of the other buildings in the area. After asking Rauher to take a seat, he fetched his father. The village elder was a weathered man, he had wrinkled skin and supported himself with a cane. He appeared to be rather strict, and nodded at Rauher before sitting down opposite him.

"Welcome," he said in a flat tone, "I see my son has brought home another traveler."

"Thank you for your hospitality. I haven't eaten in days."

The young man disappeared into the kitchen as the room fell silent. Almost half an hour later, he returned carrying a set of plates. He set two down for Rauher and the elder, and then one for himself. As Rauher ate, he told them of his travels, including a particularly interesting country which had walls spanning fifty feet. The elder seemed uninterested as much as he tried to hide it, but the young boy listened eagerly. When they were done the elder respectfully bowed, and explained he was feeling tired and wished to rest. Rauher remained in his chair and turned to the man.

"Thank you, you're quite a decent cook."

"Don't worry about it. I'm glad you enjoyed it."

"So, what do you usually do around here?"

"My father handles most of the work. I have quite a lot of spare time so I like to help out at the farm. To tell you truth, I only help out because the person I love lives there."

"She must be quite the beauty, huh?"

"Of course. The moment I laid eyes upon her I was entranced. It was as if an angel had been sent down to bless our village. My entire life changed when I met her."

"Have you told her how you feel yet?"

"No... but it's funny you arrived here today of all days. I've been thinking about it for a while, and after an argument with my father last night, I decided I would tell her the truth today no matter what."

"Your father doesn't approve of this girl then?"

"He thought I had gone mad when I had told him. 'There are much more appropriate women around,' he said. He probably wants to set me up with one of the richer girls, or someone's haughty daughter."

"Well, good for you. You shouldn't let anything get in the way of true love."

"Right! Say, why don't you meet her with me? I can't wait to tell her."

"Of course, I'm interested in meeting her too."

The man excitedly lead Rauher out of his house, by now the sun had begun to set and colored the world in a deep orange. It took less than a couple of minutes to reach the farm. The man looked around, then approached the barn. Inside, a young girl was tending to a sheep. She looked surprised to see the man, and stood up immediately.

"It's nice to meet you again," he said slightly nervously.

"Y-Yes. It's nice to meet you t-"

The young man cut the girl short and stepped forward.

"I've decided to tell you how I really feel. I couldn't forget about you. Ever since I first laid eyes on you, I knew we were meant to be together. I want to live here with you. D-Do you think that would be possible."

"I-I can understand how you feel. But if you lived here, you'd need to pull your weight. Can you help with the work?"

"Of course! Anything."

"Will you be kind?"

"Always!"

The girl coyly lowered her gaze and asked in a gentle tone. "Will you be gentle?"

"I swear it. I'll always treat you right."

The girl remained silent for a moment. After some thought, she gave a shy nod while smiling cheerfully.

The man joyfully leaped forward and suddenly embraced the sheep which had been standing next to the girl.

"Eeeep!" the sheep cried out as the man hugged her tighter.

"Look, don't hug her too tightly. She doesn't like that."

"S-Sorry, I'm just so excited! I promise I'll love you forever!"

"I know how you feel though," the girl said, stroking the fluffy white hair of the sheep, "she's one of a kind."

Rauher stood still and looked at the pair with an indescribable expression. It didn't seem as though anyone was taking any notice of him, so he slipped out and left the farm, staring up at the sky as if lost in thought.

"I wonder if that's really ok..."