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The Painter's Fairytale

Let's craft a story,
About an artist in some unnamed town,
You don't need to know much about the place,
Except for the fact that it existed in a land of fantasy,
A world of kings, knights, craftsmen, and peasants.
His name was Mess, Mess the Painter.
Mess, simply because whenever he surfaced,
From his shop, secluded in an alley in the poorer part of town,
His face was dotted with all sorts of colors of the rainbow,
Of all shades and intensities, and
His clothes, likewise, were always covered in stains,
And accompanied by newly spawned blobs that would soon
Flatten and die, joining the ranks of the colors imprinted on his attire.

Some fairytales may continue the story by describing
His clumsy nature, the mockery of the nobles, or
His poverty and troubles in his career.
But, not this one, that should be how it ends.
He was nobody, just another craftsman to join the ranks of the forgotten.
He painted for hire, that was all, so I suppose at the end of the day,
He's a very forgettable character, but I guess that's good,
That's how he would have wanted it to be.

Because, eventually a prophecy reached the oracles.
It said, someday soon, a great beast would descend upon the town,
It would arrive in grandeur, in flames and winds. It would rampage,
It would destroy, it would ruin the town until nothing remained.
But, there was hope, all prophecies stated hope,
Some sense of another path that could be taken with the proper preparations.
It said a hero would appear, one who knew his place in the world,
One who had, not only courage, fortitude, and determination,
But the traits of modesty, humbleness, and discretion to compliment it all.
If this valiant knight mastered all of these traits, he could, and would,
Capture the beast and save the town from certain destruction.

And the town seemingly erupted into chaos,
As the people began to duel, to conflict, to contest,

(No Stanza Break)

Just to figure out who was the most worthy,
To find out who had the ability to obtain the necessary traits,
To save them all.

And, in this hysteria, one painter took his perch upon a building,
He stood above everyone, the sun gleamed off his colored face,
And he boldly announced the he would gather the courage to slay the beast,
He would find the fortitude, the endurance, to best it in combat,
He would obtain the fortitude to guard the town on its day of judgment.
And after his speech, after he became visible to all of the townspeople,
There was no more dueling, the fates had spoken,
And it was clear to everyone that Mess, the painter,
Had the potential to be a true hero.

So he prepared,
He practiced dueling with the nobility,
He bought himself shining armor and a sharp sword.
He dined with royalty, gave speeches to the public about his plans,
He calmed their worries, boasted about his many plots to capture the beast.
He became famous, a hero, a legend, everyone in town knew his name,
He was no longer just a painter, no longer a nobody, no longer invisible,
He was a knight, a knight who had the potential to acquire all the traits,
To fulfill the prophecy.

Eventually,
The skies became pale red,
The winds picked up and carried sand and ash through the town,
As a fire raged towards the buildings, and
Before it all marched a terrible demon, an enormous dragon,
With individual talons the size of any man,
And claws as large as a house,
And a gigantic green reptile body that could have easily
Plowed through even the most fortified castle.

And Mess, standing before it, armed with his belittled sword,
Charged the great beast, heroically yelling,
Ready to display the valiant traits needed to best it,
Ready to show the town what he could do,
Ready to have his name written down in history,
Ready to have generations afterwards,
Stare at paintings of the slain dragon, and
Point at the brave knight standing before it, asking
“Who is that heroic man?”

And then, he flew,

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Swiped by the monster's great claw,
Mess was sent spiraling out of the dragon's way,
With one single effortless buffet.
Mess crashed, landed upon his side,
And before the pain of the numerous
Broken bones caused him to fall unconscious,
He managed to watch the dragon march into the town,
And reduce it to ashes, metal, and ruins in one single
Fury of flames.

He woke up some time later,
A patient in an infirmary,
And he was subjected to the story
Told by the doctors,
The story about the town,
Who elected a warrior to fulfill a prophecy,
A warrior, who when his time had come,
Had let everyone down, had allowed the beast
To destroy the town, a warrior who had either died in the flames,
Or who had become a coward by running away.

He was in another town now,
And they did not know,
Who he was, he was invisible again,
Hidden within the masses, he became a painter,
Once more, and he hid, returned to his occupation.
But he listened, listened to them jest and mock,
The failure of the knight, who had allowed for the
Murder of his entire town, a town who had given him everything,
A town that had let his naivety and brashness cloud their vision,
Until they forfeited all their belongings unto him,
Trusting their lives in his speeches, and for what?

But he faded out, he became a painter again,
Not a hero, not a knight, not even Mess,
Just a painter.
And then, another prophecy arose,
Since the great beast still existed,
It offered the same prediction, and the same
Instructions on how to prevent the town's
Obliteration.

And, just like the town beforehand,
Duels, festivals, and contests occurred,
To decide the chosen warrior, until finally,

(No Stanza Break)

One man found recognition,
A carpenter, who had supposedly beaten several men in a duel.
The man quickly gained notoriety, becoming a legend in a matter of days.
He enjoyed the luxuries of being an idol, found a beautiful wife,
He acquired a new home in the richest part of the town,
And everyone praised him as a savior,
Who would no doubt defeat the great beast.

And, Mess watched all this,
Watched the carpenter take the same path,
Watched the carpenter make the same mistakes,
Watched the carpenter prepare the town,
For its own destruction,
It was an end that Mess was all too familiar with.
And then, Mess realized that the prophecy was not wrong,
And the heroes were not false, and that he had not failed as a knight,
Simple because,
He had yet to become one.

He had yet to display the modesty require to call himself a knight,
He had yet to convey the humility necessary to stand before the masses,
And he had yet to obtain the discreetness to enact his deeds,
Without the desire to seek out public acknowledgement.
But, he realized now, that all these things, could not be willed,
They would only occur when the knight had an epiphany,
A downfall, a tragic drop that would bring him to his senses,
To the reality of how the world worked.

And that is why,
As the skies began to turn red,
And the wind began to carry dirt and flaming pieces of wood,
Into the town,
Mess stood above the public once again, shouted above the roars
Of the approaching dragon, and told them.
He told them who he was, he told them how he had failed,
He remained honest and guilt-driven, as he conveyed
His faults, failures, and blameworthiness to the world.

So, they stoned him.
He was bad luck, he was the failure,
He was the one who had let everyone down,
And they exiled him before the dragon could arrive.
They believed their newly elected hero would save them,
And they didn't want to associate themselves,
With someone who had the potential to fail.

(Stanza Break)

And the dragon approached,
And the carpenter stood, ready, with his sword drawn.
And the dragon began to enact its fatal swoop,
The strike that would send the chosen hero off course,
And leave the town available for the burning,
Of its flames, and the crushing,
Of its gigantic green reptile body.

But then, the area around the dragon became
Encompassed in a swirl of colors,
Colors of all parts of the rainbow,
That varied in their intensities and shades.
And the swirling formed into a bubble, that engulfed the dragon,
Compressing itself until nothing but dirt remained on the ground.
The skies cleared, the wind stopped, and the chosen hero stood alone.
The dragon was defeated, it had either fled or had been obliterated by the hero,
But that part of the tale would be up to him to decide,
He could figure out how the history books would state his legend later.

There was one odd thing about the event, that being a single object that was found
By a peasant farmer a day later, resting upside down in the dirt, a distance away
From where the dragon had supposedly been slain.

It was a painting, set upon a stiff canvas,
And embroidered in a metal frame, the color of grass
When the moon shines upon the fields at night.
And the subject of the painting was the slain dragon,
Its portrait had been captured in the frame, it was still
Taking its fatal swipe, preparing to attack its target,
Ready to fulfill the prophecy on its terms.

And the valiant hero was present, standing in front of the dragon,
Prepared to defend the town to his death, but for some reason,
He was drawn wrong, it was as if he wasn't really there.
The dragon, was so realistic, so life-like to the eyes,
But the hero was not. It was almost as if he was drawn
On top of the painting, as if he was an afterthought, as if he
Wasn't actually there.

But, no one seemed to notice the peculiarity,
The painting was utilized for the legends,
To describe the carpenter's conquest.
And the carpenter, went on to have a long
And happy life with his newly acquired status.

(Stanza Break)

And Mess, became a nobody once more.
After he had been exiled by the town,
He was never heard from again.
He was never mentioned in the history books,
Never talked about in tales of the knights,
Never even talked about as a craftsman of his trade.

But, I'll tell you this,
Before this tale reaches its conclusion.
Perhaps if you saw that painting,
The one with the chosen hero confronting the great beast,
Perhaps if you hold the painting close to your face, and
Listen intently, maybe then you'll hear,
The distant and soft echoing of a dragon's
Roar. And maybe, maybe if you're really lucky,
If you stare hard enough, at the background behind the dragon,
You might perchance notice a painter standing in the distance,
Holding onto a brush and preparing a canvas,
Now fully understanding the prophecy,
And what it truly means,
To be a hero.