His name was Sunshine. Well, it was better than Fig.

He won an award for math or something and got to come to the surface. Most of the population of earth lives underground now, so names like “Fig” and “Sunshine” are acceptable. It reminds them of things they’ve forgotten.

 I was sent to be his guide. Hopefully I can find some half decent museum or something. At the ground port (gosh, how long has it been since airports were the norm), the pod finally came.

 He was dressed in a suit and tie, which didn’t match his blonde hair. His expression was so bright and surprised.

*Gosh,* it’s just a ground port,I thought. “Hello, I’m Fig. This is the surface. You can take off your coat, it's hot outside.”

He quickly shrugged his jacket off and came close. “I was wondering,” he asked, lights reflecting in his eyes, “If we could go to a... a park or a forest or something?”

“Sure, I could find a park around here.”

I led him out of the ground port to the city of empty streets and eternal forests.

“Now we are going to the city of Street forest. It is a very beautiful and interesting city. You will see that streets are full of different creatures and trees. You can visit the museum of ancient sculptures and natural history. Did you want this?” I asked, probably with the voice of a bored tour guide.

“It is...great! The sky actually goes all the way up! Thank you!” he said.

Sky comments aside, it *was* beautiful. Monkeys were hanging from the trees. Foxes were walking on the streets. Cats with lovely faces were looking at them.

I decided to find the best of both world and went to the nearby temple. Sunshine asked why, but I just said it was too sunny outside. He looked very offended.

It was empty and quiet inside, which was nice. There were a lot of plants, too, so Sunshine would be able to fawn over more vegetation. Sunshine started reading.

“He was not a simple lion, but the first lion in the world, the king of all lions. He was a good lion, but when he was fighting with his enemies, he became aggressive. The lion liked these battles, and after 2 days he attacked simple animals, then he attacked his friends, then his family. He became a tyrant. His friends told him that he became a tyrant, but the lion wasn’t listening to his friends, and he hit his best friend to scare all lions. Nobody was talking with him, and he became more aggressive.

One day he attacked his son. Their battle was long. The lion was strong, but his son was stronger. The lion was dying. He said:

“My son, forgive me. I lost my mind. I made a lot of mistakes, I’m wicked. Bury me here, then leave this city, because who will enter the temple, will have a life full of bad luck. This curse can be broken very hard, one way to undo it is…”

“To get the sacred diamond!” I shouted sarcastically. Anyone living in Streetforest has heard this story, drawn it, written poems about it, everything. I’m sick of it.

Sunshine stopped, but went on. Young people like stories I guess.

“.… to get the sacred diamond from the mystic cave that is in the middle of the dark jungle near the steep abyss. To get to that cave you have to pass three obstacles: to fight a lot of fierce animals that live in the jungle, to go through a damned swamp full of horror creatures and, once you arrived at the abyss with the cave to guess the riddle of God Sohoo the ghost of the cave who is very mean and ruthless. If you give the wrong answer you'll sleep forever in that cave.

However, Strongly, the son of the tyrant lion who died wasn't scared and decided to go to that cave and to unravel the curse. In his way he fight a lot of dreadful snakes, bears, wolves, giant spiders and venomous scorpions, then swam through the damned swamp full of miserable frogs, devil fish and hungry leeches. Finally he arrived at the cave; there was one last obstacle to overcome...

To guess the riddle.

When God Sohoo saw a stranger in his cave he asked:

“Who dared to enter in my underground kingdom?”

“I am Strongly, the son of the Lion of all the lions. And I want to get the sacred diamond from this cave.” Sohoo laughed jeeringly:

“Will you be able to answer my riddle? I doubt! Ha ha ha. Nobody can.”

“I will try,” said Strongly.

“You are very obstinate I see. Listen to the riddle then-”

“Unfortunately,” I interrupted. “This…” I looked around. “This… temple… is closed now. So… bye!” I grabbed Sunshine’s arm and dragged him out back onto the streets of Streetforest.

 “What… was that? Fig? That was cool.” Sunshine jerked his arm away and looked behind us as we walked away.

 “I have absolutely no idea,” I answered. “I’m just glad that it’s over.”

 Sunshine nodded slowly and we continued walking. We walked along in silence for a while, until we were standing in front of the groundport we had met at.

 “So,” I stopped walking and turned to him. “Still wanna check out a park?”

 Sunshine thought for a moment, the sun reflecting off his blonde hair. He was sweating. I smiled a little and wiped my own brow. It was a long walk from the temple.

 He nodded. I jerked my chin up, gesturing for for him to follow me. We walked more, and the sun began going down. Streetforest is alway beautiful at night.

 As the sun set, people started coming out of their houses and onto their front porches, adults talking while children ran around on their lawns, chasing fireflies and laughing. People walked around, couples with linked arms and children running ahead of their parents, fooling around. It was as though the evening with its cool air, cricket noises, stars, and fireflies, brought out the people from the confines of their home, to mingle and be happy for a while, before it was time to return into the walls, and sleep.

 We exchanged polite nods and smiles with the people passing, until we reached my favorite park. I led him into the park, fireflies surrounding us as we sat down on a bench. I smiled and turned to Sunshine.

 “So!” He was looking around, gaping. I laughed. “What do you think?”
 He slowly looked at me, and a grin split his face. “Can we please see more?”

As we kept walking we saw a dog. Sunshine ran to him, hugging the life out of the poor guy.

“I am going to take him and help him.”

“Are you crazy?”

“I don’t care, I want to help.”

“I know we should call ‘im-”

 “Stop it,” I said, as the dog ran away from Sunshine. He looked on the verge of tears. “You’re going back underground in a couple hours, we spent too much time in that old temple.”

 “What?” he stood up. His suit that he wore was now covered in dirt. I don’t think he would ever think of washing it. “My wish was to spend my live above ground. I worked at that math prize for so long. What are you saying?” he glanced around, at the ground, at the trees, at the light for which he was named.

 “They gave you a visit. Get another award, maybe you’ll come again.”

 He tried to punch me, but his hands were for typing. I barely felt it. “You see this stuff every day. This stuff must be routine for you. But for me, it’s like, the next thing to heaven. I want to see where that river leads from, and what that leads to. I want to jump, jump high and not bang my head on an enforced beam of metal. This isn’t just a goal, it’s what we see in our dreams when our minds think of fantasies!”

 “You should have went into literary profession.”

 “It’s not necessary for this kind of thing! My surroundings have been gray. Gray, and white. Now I know what colors look like, and how they can have a smell, a noise, an emotion...”

 A leaf fell. He grabbed it and clenched it. “This is big for me! This is a miracle! It's a difference, and a big difference!”

 This is stupid. Inside is just fine. “Calm down! Take your miracle leaf with you, back home!”

 “But it’ll die.”

 “That’s what things *do*.”

Citations

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