

A Quest

The fate of the kingdom depended on a very loud princess and a fairy that liked to set things on fire. I think we can all agree that things were looking grim. But let me give you some context.

The kingdom of Cailedia was suffering from a plague of cuteness. The Haimshes had come to Cailedia seeking refuge from a terrible war between the dwarves and goblins in Nalbar, their home country. Hamishes are about as big as a book and tartan coloured. They look like a cross between a haggis and a porcupine with no quills. Thus they are incredibly cute.

In Cailedia there lived mostly fauns, centaurs and elves with the occasional fairy. Being all kindly beasts, seeing the adorable Hamishes had a perverse effect on them. Their hearts would swell and beat faster and faster, until they died a few days later. Many were stricken and no one was immune, except the two heroes of our story.

Firin was one of the fae folk, and her favourite prank was to set everything and anything on fire. Tarandari was an elf princess, who was an excellent hunter but her speaking voice was rather loud, due to her being deaf in one ear.

The king of Caileada had sent scouts all around the kingdom looking for any people who could complete a vital quest for him. And so Firin and Tarandari were brought before the king. Some blindfolded centaurs escorted them to the palace where they were presented at the court.

“Good morning young ones,” intoned the king in his deep centaur voice. “I need you both to go to the wisest creature in the world, Chiron, a centaur from Grebel. He will know a cure for this terrible disease brought on us by those small tartan devils. After that, you must go in search of that cure and bring it back to us. Understand?”

“Yes Sir,” answered Tara.

“Yes Sir,” answered Firin.

“Good, now go.” ordered the king.

They were given a map and escorted to the door. Firin couldn't read maps, so that job was given to Tara. As they made their way south down the road they chatted with each other and became the best of friends.

That night Tara went and shot a rabbit with her bow and arrow and Firin lit a fire. Lot walked through the oak and beech forest for three days, witnessing the terrible disease all around them. They were not sure why they didn't get sick and still don't know to this day, but they were eternally grateful for it.

Eventually, the trees turned to pine and they began to climb ever higher to the pass over Beinn Teagal. At the top, they knew they would have to deal with a yeti who always guarded the way.

“Who are you, and what is your errand?” demanded the yeti, rolling his r’s deep in his throat.

“We are on a quest for the king of Caileada, to relieve the suffering which has affected us.” chirruped Firin.

“Oh really? Well, I suppose I had better let you through,” and he stood aside, clearing the way to Grebel.

They carried on their way, travelling through many beautiful cities and towns made of marble. Grebel was a peaceful land and nobody bothered them. When they got to Areathna, the home of Chiron, they found his house and knocked on the door.

A housekeeper answered and declared that Chiron was busy and to come back the next day. Wishing to be respectful they did so. But then she told them then that it would be a week at least unless she was paid. Reluctantly Tara pulled out her purse and handed over three croams.

The housekeeper led them through the house, which was really quite large, to the back where Chiron was doing his morning yoga routine. He did not look best pleased to see them.

“Well now, what can I do for you,” he said with a sigh.

“We come from the king of Caileada who needs to know the cure for the disease that the Hamishes bring,” said Tarandari.

“Ahh, I see. In Nalbar there are springs of iron essence. Go there and take some to your king. His alchemists will work out how to make it and it should be distributed throughout the kingdom.”

And that's how they came to be making their way northeast to Nalbar. They did as Chiron said and the kingdom was saved. Their names live on to this day.

Now Caileada and Nalbar are united as one, and the bright orange drink which is brewed of iron is their national drink.