

A stranger I met

I jolted awake confused. I had no recollection of what had happened before I woke up. I was in a town unknown to me. I quickly got up, dusted myself and started walking. I asked townsfolk for directions but no one spoke English. I hopelessly continued on my directionless path.

In the midst of my self pity, I noticed a brawny man following me. I took a sudden left turn into an alleyway. After a quick glance, my suspicions were confirmed - he was following me. I walked at a faster pace but so did he. I abruptly turned back. The stranger was startled but relieved to finally get my attention. He motioned for me to follow him and against my greater judgement, I complied.

The non-verbal stranger opened a rusty metal door at the end of the alleyway. I glanced at him hesitating to enter but he gave me a reassuring nod. I entered. The man handed me a scroll that I read whilst he held up a lamp. In that collaborative moment, trust was built and I knew I would get home safely. "I'll call you Saadiq - meaning trustworthy." I told the stranger.

The scroll revealed that I had to go through three challenges to get home. A portal opened as I finished reading the last sentence. With adrenaline pumping through my veins, I jumped through the portal to reveal the challenges.

We successfully completed all three challenges.

Upon completion of the last challenge, Saadiq showed me the humongous pearly double door that was between myself and home. I could feel the warm embrace of my family beyond these doors. I climbed the flight of stairs leading to the door. As I approached the last stair, a voice echoed, "I'm sorry!" I stopped and searched for the source of the voice. The apology was repeated several times. It was coming from the stranger. I recognized the voice. The memories came flooding. It was the man I had met the night before that had taken advantage of me.

He apologized for killing me.

"The door does not lead you home. It leads to the afterlife. I sacrificed myself to escort you to your forever home. Please forgive me so that my soul may find rest." I was speechless. With no response, I opened the door and a single tear rolled down my cheek as I entered the afterlife.