

Prologue

A cool draught flowed over and through me like water into parched earth. Time condensed, then melted away. I took another breath, and to my utter amazement I began to recite *The Legend of the Broken Crown*:

“Long ago
but not far away,
Legend claims that
all the people of our Fütūr
dreamed one night
the same dream
of a land of beauty and bounty so sweet
they feared its ruin
even before they possessed it.
Our wise fathers
understood the prophecy
and planted its seed
into the soil of family lore
to nourish and cherish
with the hope that
one day
the promised land
would be ours.
And the dream survived
and grew into the heritage
that for generations
has guided our Fütūr.
And it came to pass
that in good times
the Legend was a blessing,
and in bad times
it was our salvation.

The Best Show In Town

Everyday events
took on new meaning
to remind us of
the unity it forged.
Even so
not everyone believed,
and some said it was
just folklore and myth.
But I was born
both to follow and to lead,
surrounded since childhood
with loved teachings and friends.
I was free of their doubts.
Until one day
I found myself
unable
or unwilling
to disappoint those
who supported me,
and in doing so
denied myself access
to principles and ideals
outside our beliefs
that were essential
to my spiritual stewardship.
Only when I realized
that the soil of my own garden
had become hard and dry
and difficult to penetrate
did I break my vows
to search for a happiness
I wasn't sure I would find.

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But I did, I found the promised land!
And there begins my end...
Listen well, my friend,
for though it is too late
for good deeds
to undo this sorrow,
fate gives you
my last breath of wisdom's wine
to fill your chalice...
*Ruler of your destiny,
or prisoner of your beliefs,
a treasure richer than a thousand dreams
waits.*
*No course is charted
by landmark or star,
though the way is open to all
who carry the torch of magic fire
come down from the God.
Aloft on His mercurial light,
on golden wings the spirit flies
over mountains and valleys
and fields of dreams
beyond the Valley of Songs.
Your quest begins
at summer's end
to follow midday shadows
as they wend
back in time
to a fertile valley
ringed by a humble crown
with jewels borne on the sun.
There Legend's tale*

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*is told by the wind
of a land more beautiful
than all the rest
that God caressed
with His tears of joy
and filled her vessel full.
But too much joy
made reason drunk,
and to her sisters
turned to boast
of her good fortune.
And in that endless moment
destiny devised
to take her perfect crown
and loose His liquor
for none to share.
Only the essence,
the golden seed of His joy
remained.
So great was His sorrow
that He left the valley,
now not different from the rest,
and vowed never to return
until the Promise of all that might be
was restored.
And He placed there
for all to see
an eternal tree
with golden fruit
filled with the bittersweet memories
that broke the heart
of the Lonely One.*

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And He decreed:

*'When the torch of magic fire
lights every child's heart,
only then will the fruit taste sweet.'*

*Legend claims
the mountains cried that day—
and cry still!—
where the ancient Mother
can be heard
calling her lover
home.*

*Ruler of your destiny
born to wear the crown,
make gravity your guide
as all right things must
and go to the source
like water and dust.*

*Set your course
when the sun is low in the sky.
Your destination beckons
twice each day,
then disappears
in the wink of an eye.*

*Where you find the valley of the eternal tree
you stand at Heaven's door.*

*But beware this door
for its hinge swings both ways.*

*On one side lies treasure,
on the other side truth.*

*Let your heart see
what your eyes cannot.*

But though your journey

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*brings you near,
the treasure won't be found
before a test of the soul.
As two lovers
in a starry embrace,
you and the treasure must sleep
and sow your seeds
in care-filled play,
growing seed to tree
and flower to fruit,
pulling nourishment
from dirt and root.
Sleep restores the fire
you must wake
or cast your seeds into darkness.
Patience will out
before you find
the key to unlock this prison,
where inspiration springs
in glory of the smallest things
and truth is harder to hold
than set free...
Mark these words well, my friend:
The treasure waits
on the mirror within
where wings belong
to everyone.
But to find it
you must trust the wind!
And listen to the keeper of all voices
reveal...
the way to a place*

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*you forgot...
and still it grows
where it should not...
Silvered fingers
cross and twist,
a silhouette
points through the mist,
and on the rays
of first light kiss
the Promise
before the torch grows cold...
Born of fire,
a part of you
will live forever!
But without a torch
you are only
a shadow
dying to live...*

“It’s not known if he finished it before he died,” I told her with a sigh of relief.

I was proud of myself, there was no hiding it, and not a little surprised. “It’s funny. When I was young my father could’ve told me the Legend was about anything at all, and I would’ve believed him. Still, I’m not exactly sure I understand it.”

Allee’s eyes began to widen as she murmured to herself, “***An astonishing and unmazing accomplishment. I had no idea when I met you, and yet I sensed something.***” She took a moment to reflect. Then her chest puffed out and her body stiffened. “***If you could change the course of all history and make the world a better place to live, you would, wouldn’t you? Of course you would!***” she answered for me. Another moment to reflect. Then her eyes flashed as she grabbed my