

Dread of the Future

Once upon a time at GrailHeart, where seekers came to pursue wisdom and courage, a new fear settled over the community. News had arrived that a powerful figure had risen to rule the kingdom beyond the cathedral's walls. Rumors circulated of swift changes, harsh laws, and unforeseen challenges. Although none of these changes had yet affected them, an air of dread and helplessness filled the cathedral's corridors.

Among the seekers was Tessa, a devoted soul who had long found peace in the GrailHeart way. Yet, as the days passed, she found herself dwelling on fears of what this new ruler might bring. Her mind was crowded with thoughts of how life could become harder, how her work, her freedom, her very heart might be restricted. The weight of these imagined hardships grew, casting a shadow over even her quiet moments of reflection.

Seeking clarity, Tessa went to the Garden of Reflection, a sanctuary of ancient trees and flowing water within the cathedral walls. There, she met Ansel, an elder wanderer known for his calm presence. Sensing her worry, he asked gently, "Tessa, what troubles your heart?"

She sighed, grateful for his kindness. "I'm worried, Ansel. The world outside is changing in ways that I can't control. I fear what lies ahead and feel helpless in the face of it."



Ansel nodded, listening with a calm understanding. "The fear of the unknown is heavy indeed. But tell me, Tessa, has this new ruler changed who you are?"

She thought about it, a little surprised. "No, not yet. But who's to say they won't?"

Ansel's gaze softened. "Let me tell you about a man I once knew, a gardener who tended a beautiful orchard. When a harsh king came to power, many feared he would cut down the orchard to build a fortress. The gardener had no control over this possibility, but he

continued to tend his trees with love and care each day. When asked why he didn't give up, he simply said, 'No ruler, no law can stop me from nurturing these trees today. If tomorrow they are taken, so be it — but today, I am free to care for them.'

Ansel looked back at Tessa. "Do you see? External power may bring challenges, but no ruler can prevent you from being a compassionate person in this moment. If you choose to bring love and peace into the world right now, there is no force that can stop you."

The words settled deeply into Tessa's heart. She realized she had allowed the mere anticipation of change to rob her of her peace. She had imagined herself helpless, when in truth, her power to act with love and compassion was hers alone — untouchable by any external ruler or circumstance.

In the days that followed, Tessa resolved to let go of the fearful shadows cast by the future and instead focus on how she could bring kindness to each moment. She poured her energy into caring for others, hearing their concerns, and sharing warmth and comfort in the face of uncertainty. Her own heart grew lighter, strengthened by every small act of compassion she offered, and by gratitude for all that was good, true, and beautiful in her life.

Through her quiet example, Tessa's story became a cherished teaching at GrailHeart. Wanderers learned that no matter what storms may come, their capacity to love, to be compassionate, and act with kindness is a freedom that no ruler, no law, and no circumstance can ever take away.

In the end, Tessa's journey taught that while the world may change, our ability to act with courage and compassion remains constant, a sanctuary within us all. And thus, in times of shadow and uncertainty, the wanderers of GrailHeart would look within, knowing that true power lies not in controlling the future, but in bringing light and compassion to the present.

The Heart's Dominion

When shadows fall and rumors fly,
And change looms dark against the sky,
Remember, friend, the choice is near —
To live in fear, or hold love dear.

For rulers rise, and rulers fall,
But cannot touch your heart's own call.
In every breath, a freedom waits,
Beyond the reach of any fate.

So let compassion root and grow,
A calm in peace, a strength in woe.
No rule can claim what you have sown —
Your heart's dominion is your own.

While others fret, stand rooted, whole,
For love alone can guard your soul.

— *William Zeitler*

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