

Old and New Foundations

Once upon a time, there was a master mason named Corin, known far and wide for his skill in building the grandest of cathedrals. Corin had spent his entire life laying stone upon stone, trusting his knowledge of weight, balance, and structure. To him, the rules of stonework were as unchanging as the mountains themselves. He built according to the ancient ways, passed down through generations, and never questioned the foundations upon which his craft rested.

One day, a young apprentice named Rion joined Corin's workshop. Rion, while respectful of the old traditions, had a mind filled with new ideas. He spent his evenings not just studying stone, but also watching how the wind moved through the trees and how water shaped the land. Rion noticed something strange — something the old masons had never considered. He began to wonder if perhaps the principles that Corin had always trusted weren't as fixed as they seemed.

"Master," Rion said one morning, "what if the strength of a building is not in how heavy the stones are or how they fit together, but in how they interact with forces we cannot see?"

Corin laughed at the boy's folly. "Stone is stone. You cannot build cathedrals from air and dreams."

But Rion persisted. He began experimenting in secret, crafting arches with new designs that played with lightness, with the way the wind swept through an open space, and how the earth beneath it shifted. He believed there was more to building than weight and mass. Slowly, others in the workshop took notice. The small test structures that Rion built seemed to defy gravity, bending the rules that Corin had always thought were unbreakable.

One day, a storm came. The winds howled and the ground trembled. To Corin's horror, part of the great cathedral he had built began to crack. As he rushed to the site, he found Rion standing calmly, watching his experimental structure stand firm amidst the chaos.

"How can this be?" Corin asked. "The storm should have torn your work apart."

Rion smiled softly. "The storm didn't break it because it wasn't fighting the wind. The old ways are strong, Master, but there are truths even older than stone, ones we do not fully understand. Perhaps what we believe to be unshakable may not be as certain as we think."

Corin, humbled, realized that the foundations of his understanding might need to change. It wasn't that stonework was wrong — it was that there was more to the world than his narrow view of it. The young apprentice had shown him that the world was not just made of what could be seen or touched, but also of forces invisible, ideas ungraspable, and realities yet to be discovered.

From that day on, Corin worked side by side with Rion, not abandoning the old ways but expanding them. He began to see the mystery of the world anew, with hope that there were always greater truths to discover, even in what seemed most certain.

And so, in both stone and spirit, they continued building, with curiosity as their new foundation.

— *William Zeitler*
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