

# Two Sisters

**I**n the coastal village of Windmere, nestled high on the cliffs overlooking the restless sea, there lived two sisters: Althea and Corinne. Born into a family of prosperous merchants, they were not only wealthy but also deeply respected for their contributions to the community. Yet, despite their shared status, the sisters could not have been more different. Althea, the elder, was a dreamer with her head perpetually in the clouds, captivated by the ethereal and the divine. Corinne, younger by just two years, was grounded, pragmatic, and unwavering in her dedication to the tangible.

The sisters were close in childhood, spending their days exploring the rocky coastline and their nights listening to the tales of travelers who brought news of distant lands. But as they grew older, their differences became a source of contention. Each sister had her own vision of the world, and neither was willing to bend.

One summer, after a season of abundant trade that filled their coffers to overflowing, the sisters decided to gift the village a new chapel. The old one, weathered by time and salt-laden winds, had grown too small for the flourishing community. It seemed a noble act, one that might unify the sisters and the village. Yet, as soon as plans began, so too did the arguments.

Althea envisioned a soaring spire, elegant and slim, pointing ever heavenward. “A spire will inspire the soul to reach beyond itself, to touch the eternal,” she declared, her voice imbued with fervor. Corinne, ever practical, countered with a vision of a broad tower. “A tower will endure, standing firm against the winds of time, a reminder of the strength of community,” she argued.

The villagers watched with a mix of admiration and unease as the sisters’ debates escalated. What began as impassioned discussions turned into a stubborn rivalry. The two declared that compromise was impossible and resolved to build separate chapels on opposite cliffs framing the village — Althea’s spire on the eastern headland and Corinne’s tower on the western.

Each sister spared no expense. Althea imported marble so pale it gleamed like moonlight, its delicate carvings and spiraling pinnacles seeming to defy gravity. Corinne, in contrast, oversaw the construction of a stout and majestic tower, built of dark stone quarried from the mountains, its base so wide it seemed immovable. The chapels grew side by side, yet worlds apart, as villagers whispered their concerns. “Division weakens the bonds that hold us together,” some murmured, while others marveled at the beauty of the rising structures.

When the chapels were completed, they were nothing short of magnificent. Pilgrims traveled from far and wide to witness the twin marvels: one reaching for the heavens, the other embracing the earth. Yet, for all their splendor, the chapels stood as silent monuments to the sisters’ estrangement. Althea and Corinne spoke no more, their pride too great to bridge the chasm they had created.

Years passed, and the chapels became symbols of the village’s identity. But the cliffs on which they stood, battered by relentless waves and howling winds, began to erode. Each winter, the

sea claimed a little more of the land. The villagers noticed cracks forming in the foundations but were powerless to stop nature's relentless march. Althea and Corinne, by then aged and frail, continued to maintain their separate sanctuaries, neither willing to acknowledge the inevitable.

One stormy night, a great gale swept through Windmere. The villagers huddled in their homes, listening to the roar of the sea as waves crashed against the cliffs. By morning, Althea's spire lay in ruins, its marble pillars shattered and swallowed by the ocean. Corinne's tower endured a little longer, but the following winter, another fierce storm claimed it too. The sisters, devastated by the loss of their creations, retreated into silence. Within a few years, both passed away, leaving behind only memories and the empty cliffs.

The villagers, mourning the loss of the chapels but wary of repeating the sisters' mistakes, erected a simple monument. Carved into its surface were the words:

Two sisters stood on cliffs apart,  
Each built with pride, yet lacked the heart  
To see the value in the other's way,  
And so division marked their day.  
One reached for skies, the heavens' height,  
The other stood firm, a grounded might.  
Both visions bold, yet neither could see,  
That harmony's strength lies in unity.  
The spire and tower, lost to the tide,  
Became a lesson: not in what divides,  
But in bonds that strengthen, where earth meets sky,  
Together we rise, as the waves pass by.

The monument became a gathering place for the village. Without the towering chapels, the community began to forge new traditions. They prayed together under the open sky, sang songs carried by the sea breeze, and shared stories that honored both the spire's soaring

vision and the tower's enduring strength. Over time, the villagers came to see the loss of the chapels not as a tragedy but as a blessing in disguise. The empty cliffs, once symbols of division, now represented the power of humility and unity.

Decades later, a traveler passing through Windmere asked an old villager about the monument. The elder, his face lined with years and wisdom, smiled as he recounted the tale of the sisters. "Their pride was their undoing," he said, "but their story is our greatest treasure. From their division, we learned the strength of community. From their loss, we found ourselves."

And so, the memory of Althea and Corinne endured — not as builders of rival chapels, but as teachers of a profound lesson. Their lives, etched into the cliffs and the hearts of the villagers, became a reminder that true strength is not found in towering structures or unyielding pride, but in the bonds that unite us and the humility to embrace them.

— *William Zeitler*  
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