

Castle

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There was once an open field, born in the heart of the south. Most would call it an empty meadow, awaiting its turn to become something...more. Some would say it was nothing but a place connected to a memory. But for one set of eyes, it was a clean slate, a flourishing paradise, a garden of seeds. The young boy was a greenskeeper with the soil, his nails collecting dirt and his hands planting with seamless ease, understanding the limited space but appreciating the boundless wonders he could create in this unified relationship of his. In this world, the young boy was free to roam and explore the field that brought a beaming, sunny smile to his face. Whether it was pitching a kite that pirouetted in the sky, its dashing tail swaying through the midday breeze, or even catching fireflies in a jar to continue his antics throughout the night, he never found himself letting a second slip. He was always moving, growing. Although, sometimes, the young boy just loved to sit in the silence of the tall grass, nestled between each soft blade as his silhouette imprinted the field, like an artist and his signature.

Life was so simple for him in those days, but as days passed, so did simplicity. The world outside always had a way to seep through the cracks. After failure, after disappointment, after all—time leaves a fleeting window to adapt or collapse inside the isolation. In light of this, or more fittingly, in dark, the field began to fade, much like a leaf in the coming of autumn.

Gently, as he placed a brick, the ground welcomed it in its motherly arms, knowing it was only for the best. The ground let go of its last breath of sunlight, of air, of freedom, of once being called an open field as the color seeped from the vibrant green. The next pieces followed as if they were ducklings waddling alongside their mother, eager to stay in line or be lost. Each block with such precision, he built it up high like the trees he used to climb, wide like the vastness of his plants. But as a vacuum to a crumb, the final brick sucked away the memory. Looking around, he released the tension in his shoulders to take in his new home: a strong, sturdy, and safe castle that could withstand. Notwithstanding the outside world, there was no longer an open field, but rather a place built on yesterday. The walls were a piece of him that made him whole, and who he was now: a wiser and more fortified man ready for the certainty of tomorrow.

With a calming stillness filling his mind, he closed the door behind him and squeezed into the mold of his old signature, looking around at his walls of acceptance, struggling to remember the innocence of that empty meadow.