

Jon - Chelsea, Year 6, NSW

Jon was a wizard who lived in a misty, mysterious forest, every drop of mist and leaf forgotten over the ages. He had no money to spare, so he gathered the materials for his inventions near his home, knowing where each ingredient could be found.

If Jon ever felt like one of his inventions, which he worked on for years, would succeed, he would endure a long, grueling walk, through rippling hills and lifeless ruins, collecting materials on the way. By the time he completed his trek, he would finally arrive at the village with a hopeful, exhausted face. But Jon's concoction would always be greeted with anger and teasing.

"Does this invention help feed people, or even cure diseases? No! So, get out of our town, where you will never belong!" were the very words that would always be thrown at him, his face reversing into a mournful frown.

They would instead praise another young boy who made effortless inventions instead.

However, what they didn't know about Jon was that he had the ability of predicting the future, aiding his regular collection of materials. One night, after many vague predictions, he sensed a foreboding, worrying foresight: a beast would destroy his land. A dragon? A gargoyle? A mirror version of himself? Jon did not know. He sobbed himself to sleep, wondering if the threat would reach his tiny, wooden abode, after wreaking havoc in the village.

The next day, after a restless night, Jon woke up to an overcast, dull morning, the birds' cheerful serenade replaced by a deafening silence, a warning of the danger to come. Even the ravens stopped cawing. He gaped in shock, and knew he had to finish his creation quickly.

Eventually, he fastened the last screw onto his invention, a radiant green orb, encasing an extremely unstable mineral he had carefully collected from the abandoned mines, admiring that it could save his land. Then, Jon knew that he had to warn the village of the disaster and hastily sprinted to his destination.

He arrived just in time, when the town had only just started making its morning announcements. Jon hurried to the stage once someone else had announced her own news, and he started warning of the disaster that would cause devastation in the village.

"In a week, a disaster will eventually come, so prepare your home for-"

The villagers gasped in disbelief, interrupting his announcement.

“Nonsense! Why would you even try to speak to us again? Your ideas and prophecies are useless, USELESS!” the mayor cried out in annoyance. He then sent forward that same child that the villagers always praised, the young boy shoving Jon off the lectern.

“Next week, our village will be celebrating its annual Market Festival! There will be shops...” the child enthusiastically cheered.

As the child spoke on the stage, Jon lay on the floor, with tears again, in his eyes. A pondering bounced through his mind. *Why can I never have the freedom to be heard, to be honoured, or to even be welcome? I won't ever try to speak to the village again.*

When the favoured boy concluded his speech and bowed, he was met with thundering applause, with some townsfolk even throwing money onto the stage, which the boy hastily grabbed to himself.

“Marvellous! That is what a proper announcement should be like; not some terrible prophecy like the previous one!” a lady yelled with her thumbs standing high above her head.

After the people had left to do their everyday chores, Jon stealthily collected the coins that failed to land onto the stage. As always, the innkeeper would never accept him into his motel, and so, Jon ambled, disappointed, with an ache in his heart, back home.

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A week passed, and Jon's agonising pain had not yet subsided, and nature's silence continued. He knew that today was to be a day of chaos, as a threat would come. As he exited his house to try to help the village, taking his creation with him, Jon heard a shriek, so loud that he could faintly hear it from his house, far away from the town.

“A beast! Someone, help us!” they shouted as their arms flailed in the air.

Jon hurriedly rushed to the village. However, when he could finally see it from a distance, he noticed a raging flame and had to take another route. Jon knew that the alternate journey was much longer than the usual one, but had to do all he could to save the settlement, to protect his home and his beloved forest.

Every part of Jon's body was aching by the time he reached his destination. When he looked up to see the village, he found that instead of a bustling, busy town, it was reduced to burning, charred tatters. Jon could hear the warriors of a distant tribe yelling in their fight against the beast. It was menacing, a blood-red monster with spines resembling the devil's horns, a broken amalgamation of Jon's foresights - a dragon, a gargoyle and a ridiculed wizard all in one.

“Hey, wizard, whatever your name is. We trust you now, actually. Please help us, just this once!” one of the townsfolk said to Jon.

“Wizard! I’ll be your friend in this battle! We really, really need your help.” It was the same child the villagers had congratulated so much, the same child the world seemed to follow, the same child that would ask an abhorred person who had always been shoved into his footprints.

Jon’s face creased with smiles at seemingly untrue words. He could not believe that the villagers had finally given him the freedom to be trusted, and even to not be teased.

And so, he battled with them, against the beast. The fighters, including Jon, fought as vigorously as they could, but no one could even make a mark on the monster’s impenetrable scales. But then, Jon started to predict an outcome: he would have to use his invention, but it would kill him in the process. But if he didn’t, the village and all that Jon knew would be gone forever, living a life of torture and sorrow.

Jon hesitated to use his creation, but when he heard toddlers, children and babies weep and scream, he realised he had to save his home for everyone. So, he ran towards the monster, aiming for its head.

“No! What are you doing?” a villager yelled.

“I must do this for our land!” Jon replied.

Then, he gave a wave of good luck and hurled his orb at the monstrosity for the very last time, slaying the beast, and in turn, himself.

“No, John...” the whole village muttered under their breath, as if their lips were stuck together by fate, with tears streaming down their cheeks.

In his last moments, the people finally trusted him, needed him and forged strong chains of friendship with him, even if they would crack a while after. They one day honoured him with a noble statue, working for hours in return for the price he paid. Jon finally had unwavering freedom in the afterlife, a hero under his now broken mask.