

PRINCE OF PERSIA®

Stories And Secrets





In the City of Light, there lived
a young girl whose mother was the queen.

And, since her mother was the queen,
that made her a princess.

She pretended not to like it.

On warm nights, when she and
her mother walked in the garden,
they would sometimes tell stories.





Over the wall, the world grew darker.

Of course, this happened every night.

But she had dreamed once about

a night that never ended,

about a morning that never came.

She told her mother about it.





I have had a dream as well, said her mother.

Do you want to tell me, mother?

Asked Elika.

The queen shook her head.

Even so, she began to speak.





Long ago, she said, there was a splendid Prince. His skill in the hunt was unmatched, and the beasts of the earth called him master.

It was said that he could pierce the sun and the moon with a single arrow.





He travelled for years, forever in
search of new challenges.

He found them. Or, they found him.

He lived for these moments.

He needed them.





Having mastered the creatures of the
earth and the air, he began to stalk
the writhing monsters of legend -
those things which dwell only in tales.

With each triumph, he bled the world dry.





Soon, there was nothing left that
could stir him. One by one,
he sent his servants away.

Then, his family.

Though he sat on a jade throne
in a palace of marble,
he lived in exile from the world.





He prowled his gardens now,
filled as they were with the
wild things of his many conquests,
a shrine to his dominion over the earth.

It exhausted him.
There was no pleasure in it.



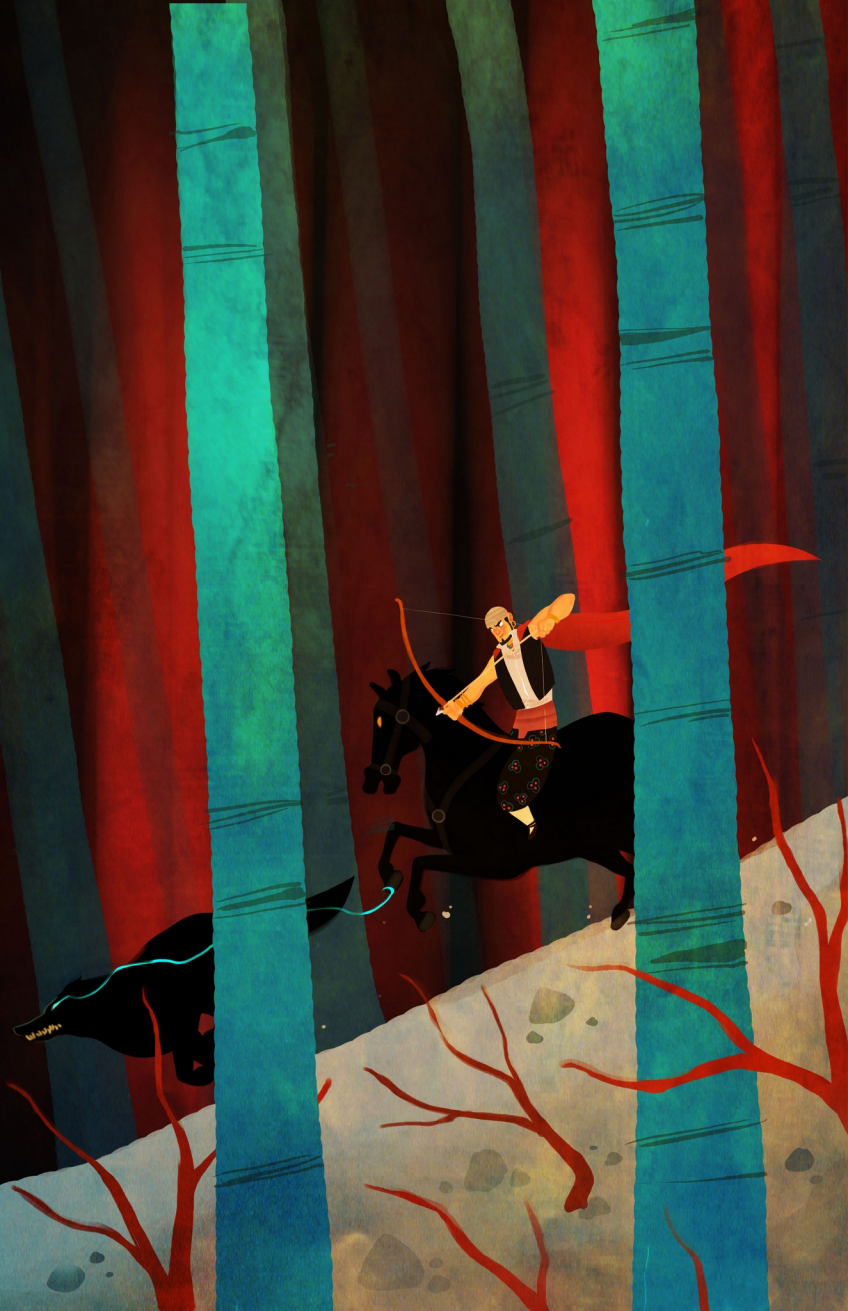


Disorder had seized the garden,
just as it had seized his mind.

He looked over from the veranda,
wondering if he should not
step out from it, out into the wind.

But, there! What was this? A wolf?
Nowhere had he seen one such as this,
with glinting eyes that whispered
of a cunning mind.





For the first time in years,
he felt his blood running
quick in his limbs.

What a quarry! And to think,
it had been here all along!





As he followed the beast, it seemed to change shapes. It was a jaguar, and then a great bird. It was a lion. It would leap into the air as a horned gazelle, and then land as a grinning crocodile.





After many days spent in pursuit,
the creature seemed to flow
into the deep shadows of a cave.

He entered without hesitation.
His heart felt as though it would burst.





No living thing lurked within.
Even so, the cave was not empty.

A voice asked him, then: What do you desire most?

The hunt, said the Prince. A hunt without end.





Yes, it said. You would have a world
without quarter, without protection?
Every safe place burned away, every home in ruins?

Give it to me, cried the Prince. And so it was.

Go then, Hunter, said the voice.
It laughed, but the Prince did not know why.





The thing that crept from the cave
was very different than what had gone in.

In the distance, he heard the hunting horns.
Men had come already to hunt him,
and he would hunt them in return.

The symmetry was breathtaking.
He wept with the joy of it.



Elika finished the story, leaving
nothing out, just as it had been told to her.
The stranger heard her, but said nothing.

Her mother had once told her that true wisdom is
knowing when the old stories come true.
She felt sure that this was happening now.

