

# HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

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LE GUIN, ALEXANDER MARSHALL AND OTHERS

**ISSUE # 5**

**MISS  
STARLIGHT  
AND THE AEGEA  
WAVE**

**BY ALEXANDER  
MARSHALL**

**AT THE BACK OF  
THE NORTH WIND  
BY GEORGE  
MACDONALD**

**STILL ALIVE**

**By Gary Bonn**

**A Window into  
Middle-earth**

CLARENDON HOUSE  
PUBLICATIONS

# HIGH FANTASY

## AND SCIENCE FICTION

### MAGAZINE

## Welcome to the fifth issue of High Fantasy and Science Fiction Magazine!

The magazine is associated with the social media group **High Fantasy and Science Fiction** designed to interest and excite anyone interested in the above genres.

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We hope to hear from you!

-Clarendon House Publications

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# HIGH FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE



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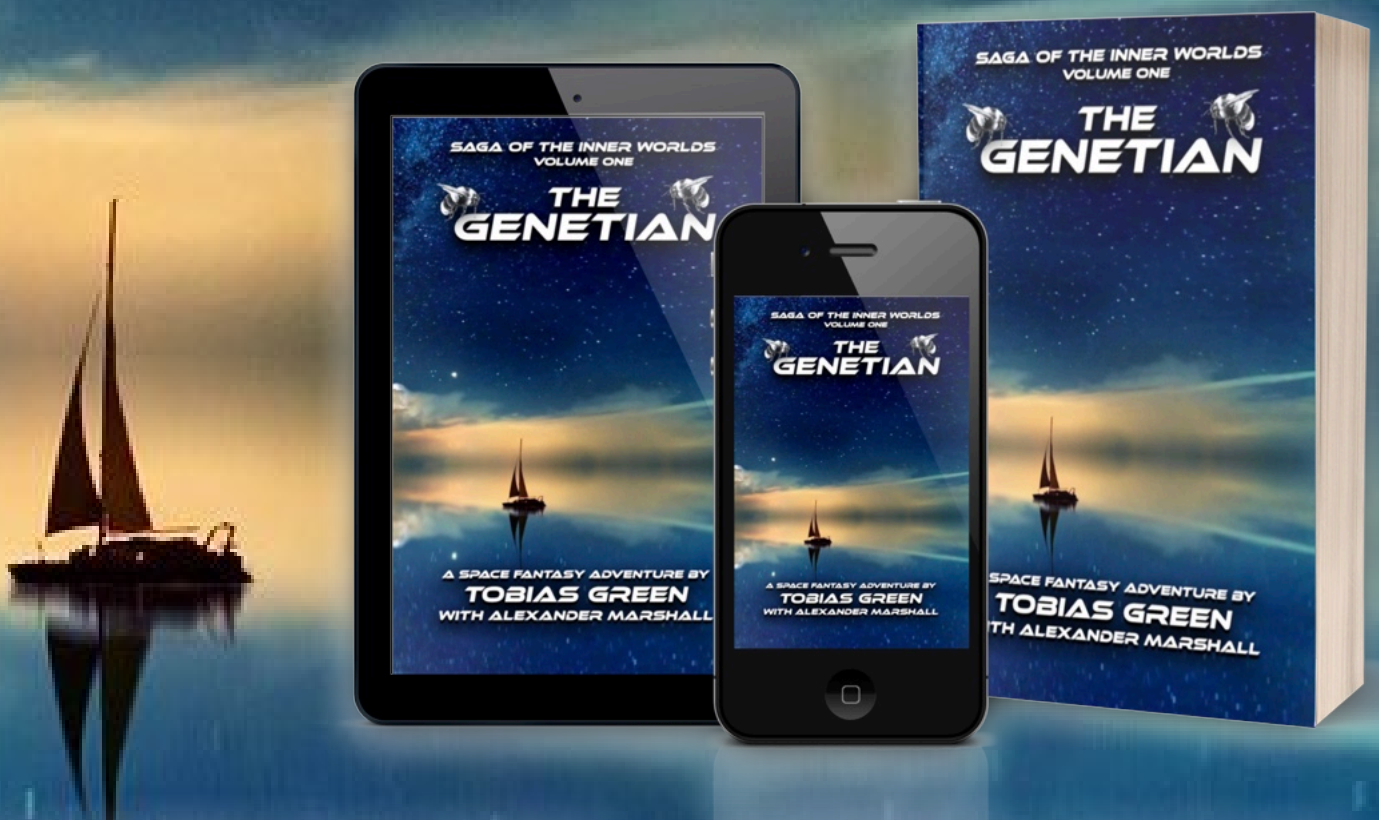
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AS ALEXANDER MARSHALL, TOBIAS GREEN, J.R.R. TOLKIEN AND  
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# STILL ALIVE

Gary Bowen



Shonnie sits on a rock. He's often sitting on rocks, hands on knees, watching. He's part of the landscape. His scrawny legs and small but flaccid stomach are familiar to all around; so too his bald head, gnarled knuckles and stiff grey beard.

He's watched teenagers playing in the fairy pools for as long as he can remember. He wants to find the teenager he used to be, though that person was never really far away and still lives within him. He carries a message to all teenagers: 'don't worry'. Of course they will, teenagers are balled-up self-hugs of seething worries. What he's trying to tell them is worry as much as you like but you don't actually have to. They won't listen. He never did. His point is to be there to tell them anyway.

Now he's watching younger children. They're clambering on rocks, some unsteady, paddling ankle-deep and unsure. Shonnie is trying to span the gap in himself between teenager and child. It's like a bridge lost somewhere and only children can help him find it again. He needs to be called from their side.

He loves the children of course and is there to tell them not to worry too. They don't need him to be around: there is no danger. Even the plunging waterfalls, fiercest whirlpools and most treacherous cliffs are nothing but a source of fun, wonder and delight. Danger is part of an older perception, a world they left behind.

Once he's found the child he was, he will feel more complete. There's no reason to undertake this task except he wants to. That's all.



He's watching Isbell. She's been here a long time and has settled in completely. She's racing through the water, plunging over a fall, crashing among rocks, shrieking with laughter – showing the other children what to do. Showing off kindly. She becomes the motion, the speed, the forces at one moment chaotic and in the next ordered. Tangling and untangling.

Isbell sometimes sits hugging her knees, staring into space, shaking with sadness. Occasionally she comes to Shonnie for hugs and stories or simply to be with someone strong and tranquil.

Sometimes he goes to her just to show he cares, and is always ready to be rebuffed from a loneliness not for sharing.

Shonnie has been here long enough to see the lines connecting each person to everyone else, an elastic three-dimensional web which, in itself, is a greater being: tangling and untangling. Sometimes he flows into all of it but he's not ready to stay there yet. He has more watching to do. There's still love in him to spend in a very human way. Nor is he ready to

relinquish his body, however insubstantial. He's happy with things the way they are.

Isbell approaches him, she has a little boy in tow, water dripping from hands held. "Have you met Lewis?" she calls.

"Aye, Isbell. Lewis is a fine lad."

"He's new here."

"Aye, and he watches you at all your antics. He'll be doing the same things before we know it." Shonnie opens his arms. "Lewis, my man, you're looking sad. There's always a hug between these two arms."

Lewis doesn't come forward but presses himself against Isbell. Shonnie sees towering Cuillin mountains behind the two children, the lonely ice-bound crags from which comes this tumultuous water. Water that carves these falls and enchanting pools.

Lewis withdraws a thumb from his mouth. "My mum and dad are still alive."

"Don't worry. It won't be for ever. They'll come here for you one day." Shonnie smiles.

"Parents always come eventually."

CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR

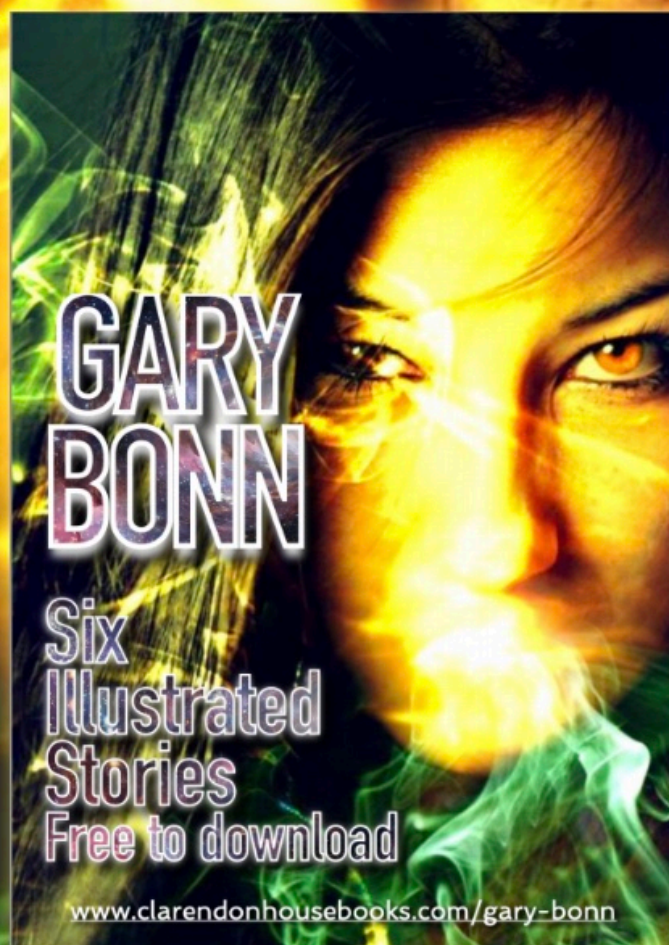
GARY BONN



# GARY BONN

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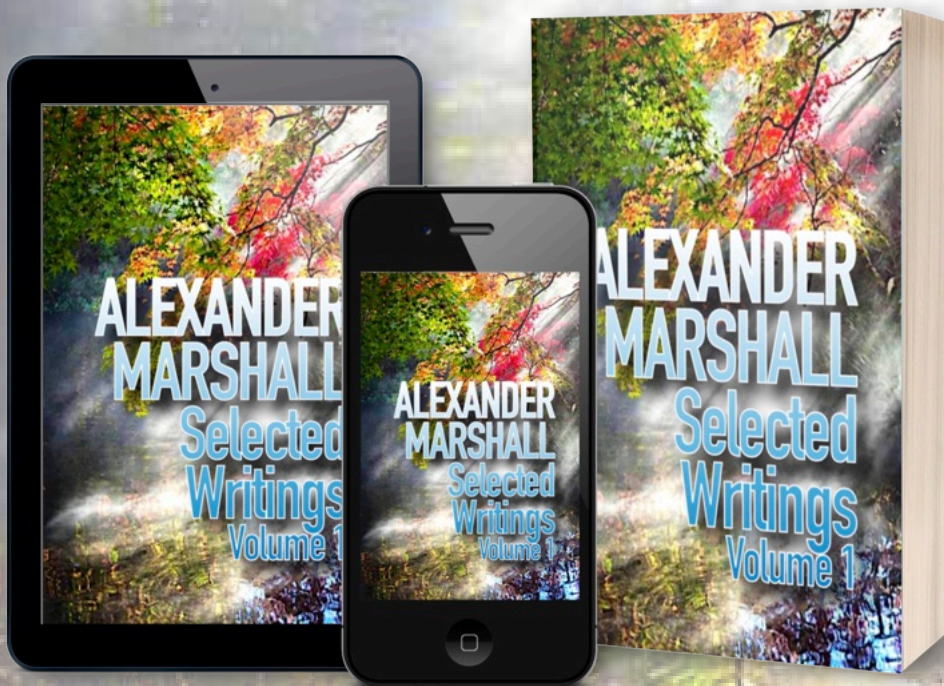
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ALEXANDER MARSHALL


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—Grant P. Hudson, Editor



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A dramatic scene from a cave. A waterfall flows down the center, illuminated by a bright shaft of light from above. The surrounding rock walls are dark and textured. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and ancient.

'She was an Orphan of the Fourth Order?'

'Yes - not only had her form lost its biological parents, her society and culture, and her natural environment, but the entire planet on which she was nurtured had been destroyed.'

'By the Nega Wave?'

'Yes.'

The Challenger and his acolyte were walking through the Caves of Batros. Brilliant shafts of sunlight beamed down from specially crafted windows in the caves' ceiling, illuminating the swift-running blue river and the darting white birds which flickered in and out of the light silently.

'Will you tell me her tale?' the acolyte asked.

'I will,' the Challenger replied. 'It will serve as an introduction to your task. This is the first part of her story.'

# MISS STARLIGHT AND THE NEGA WAVE

ALEXANDER MARSHALL

The Admiral, super-powered commander of an immense nano-navy of his own creation, led the defence in the Gliese 887 system. With the galactic disturbance known as the Nega Wave approaching Earth, the Admiral had been dispatched to build a citadel in the region of the north pole of the planet Aerda, as a bastion. From there, the Positronic Cannon could fire immense counter-forces towards the Wave, in the hope of breaking it up or deflecting it before it got any nearer to Earth.

The Admiral was supremely confident that, with his vast navy of sub-microscopic drones, and with the help of the planet's native workforce, he could establish the citadel and the cannon in plenty of time to launch the bombardment. What he wasn't so sure about was where the power would come from to fuel the enormous needs of the cannon - he knew that it would take the energy levels of several stars to have any effect on the Wave.

That was why, one rainy evening as Aerda edged around the gas giant which was its mother planet, he sat under a tarpaulin, sheltering from the perpetual rain, and interviewed a batch of specially selected candidates. Most of them had proved unsuitable, with nowhere near the required abilities, but this latest one, the last in the line, looked more promising. She stood to attention in front of his table as he flicked through the holofiles he had been given.

'I have to say, Candidate 447, that these holofiles are skimpy at best,' he said, 'and I don't have time to hear your full life story. What makes you think you'd be especially useful to us, here on the frontier?'

'Sir, if I might demonstrate?' the candidate replied.

She was young, the Admiral thought - in Earth terms at least. But with the Earth Empire now including over a hundred alien worlds, some of them spawning almost unrecognisable life forms, who knew what age she really was? On her planet, he mused to himself, she might have been regarded as a crone.

'Go ahead, please,' he said aloud. 'But make it swift. As I say, I have limited time.'





The young woman hastily removed a glove from her right hand and flexed her fingers. Almost at once, several orbs of light, varying in colour and density, leapt out from her palm and hovered in the air, illuminating the hastily constructed tent. It was as though miniature suns had dawned inside the space. As she moved her fingers, the orbs levitated around, staying within a foot or so of her hand, but appearing animated.

The Admiral was speechless.

'Vibro-particles,' the candidate said. 'Natives of my world are born in a vibro-plasma. These energies are as natural to us as the air we breathe. They are capable of generating levels of power ranging from the delicate to the explosive.'

'Vibro-particles, eh?' he said. 'And you produce these naturally? Is there a limit to the amount you can generate?'

The candidate shook her head.

'No one knows, sir,' she said.

'No one on your planet has explored their capabilities?'

The candidate looked at the ground.

'My planet no longer exists, sir,' she said quietly.

The Admiral flicked rapidly through the holofiles again.

'I see,' he said. 'Well, I can see that you might be of some use to us. Do you have any field experience, 447?'

'A little, sir.'

'Right.'

He stood up and dragged a holoscreen down, displaying a map of the northern part of Aerda.



'As I hope you've been briefed,' he said, 'though the Nega Wave itself is still some light years away, its quantum echoes are having an effect on this planet's environment already. Aerda's natural ecology is being warped, distorted, mutated - whatever you want to call it - and the resulting monstrosities are turning on the rest of the inhabitants with murderous intent. Most of the sphere is overrun now by these creatures.'

He flicked the holoscreen and an image of a large octopoid animal appeared.

'Cephalopods, sir,' 447 said.

'They call 'em Ceph's out here, 447. Hideous tentacled monstrosities with a ravenous appetite for just about anything they can wrap their tentacles around. Now, out here...' he flicked the

screen back to the map, 'we're constructing a defensive perimeter against these Ceph's, with a view to protecting this inner zone until we're ready to begin firing the cannon.'

'Yes sir.'

'I'm sending you as your first duty out to this forward line to oversee its construction. Think you can manage that, 447?'

'I will do what I can, sir.'

The Admiral paused, looking the candidate up and down.

'I'll have your detailed orders transmitted to you right away,' he said. 'The idea is not to get yourself eaten on your first day on Aerda, 447. I might need your vibro-whatsit particles. Is that understood?'

'Yes sir.'



\*

Candidate 447, like most of the newly recruited individuals on Aerda, quickly picked up a nickname, based on the banter with her fellow soldiers. She became known as Miss Starlight, on account not only of her unusual capabilities with orbs of light, but also her gentle and kind nature - something of a rarity on Aerda, where the main feature was almost continuous rain and radically shifting temperatures due to the planet's erratic orbit around its gas giant.

Miss Starlight was quiet; she kept her own counsel, was hardly ever to be seen gathering with her cohort, and tended to avoid any kind of approach from those around her, particularly the men, who, like most frontier males, were inclined to be aggressive and intrusive. As a result, no one really knew why she had volunteered for the assignment, a grim one at best: battling the oncoming Nega Wave and its effects on a planet light years from Earth.

'But she ain't from Earth,' one of the other soldiers said during mess, 'ain't you heard?'

'Where's she from then, Grove?'

'Grove don't know,' a female soldier called Fortiv said, 'no one knows. Sad type.'

'Saddies are the first to die on any mission,' Grove said, biting into his nutri-bread.

'That means you'll be the first to go, Grove,' another voice said, to general laughter.



\*

The first thing that struck Miss Starlight about the Aerdans was their general friendliness. Despite hardships - levels of poverty which made her gasp, and conditions occasionally so squalid that she had to look away sometimes - they seemed to somehow muster a spirit of cheerfulness. At the advanced outpost, she worked closely with several families as they struggled to raise a giant earthwork, using only primitive tools or their bare hands.

Starlight wondered why the Admiral could not assign some of his huge nano-machines to assist in such a mundane task, but a native girl called Alalda just shrugged her shoulders when Starlight inadvertently said something to that effect out loud one mealtime.

'The alien chief has greater needs,' Alalda said, and continued shovelling mud into a bucket with her fingers.

Starlight supposed the girl must be right: constructing the energy cannon must be the first

priority. But she wished she could do more for these people, with whom she felt a strong empathy. Generating vibro-particles from her hands helped to seal the mud wall as it was built, and it also helped to make the Aerdan children smile as they watched the multi-coloured orbs spinning and whirling in the air, but the hard work of shifting the solid earth was beyond her.

Returning to the base, Starlight found herself feeling alienated once more. She began wishing that she could be assigned to visit the outer zone again, especially when she found that she had been tasked with helping to set up a celebration.

'Celebration?' she asked Fortiv. 'What is there to celebrate?'

'It's how the Admiral thinks,' Fortiv replied, with a shrug. 'His tiny robots will have finished the cannon soon and he wants to mark the occasion.'

Starlight was put to work gathering what flowers she could around the desolate region of Aerda's pole.



\*

Two days after her arrival, as she returned to the camp laden with buckets of the diminutive white osscalt rock-flowers she had accumulated, she heard the news: there had been a devastating attack at the outpost to which she had first been assigned. A contingent of Cephalods had clambered over the earthen wall and wreaked havoc amongst the Aerdans. Five Aerdan men had been horrifically killed - Starlight knew some of their names.

'Surely this will mean the festivities will be cancelled?' she said to Fortiv as she read the holoscreens containing the news.

'Total nonsense,' said a voice behind her. The Admiral towered over her, frowning. 'The best thing to do in the face of a setback like this is to plough on. Create create create. That's the only way to defeat the Ceph's - and the whole Nega Wave, as a matter of fact.'

He marched off, leaving Starlight picturing the faces of some of those she had known who were now dead.

\*

Starlight found that she could not sleep that night. Rain poured down on the tent where she lay. She decided that the best thing to do would be to try to approach Lawgiver, the Admiral's famous wife, the woman who possessed god-like telekinetic powers according to what Starlight had read. She might be able to persuade her husband to cancel or at least postpone the celebrations, and perhaps even to flow some aid to the bereaved families.

'Oh I don't think that would be at all appropriate,' the tall blond said, when Starlight eventually got through all the protocol and managed to see her two days later. Lawgiver was a powerfully built woman who looked to be in her late fifties. She had come to Aerda to visit her husband, and was dressed in her League of Albion uniform, a sleek silver affair, adorned with well-placed gems. She frowned down at Starlight in a half-amused fashion. 'What you have to remember, girl,' she said, 'is that there is more going on here than the tragedies of a few native families. We have not only a planet's morale to keep uplifted, but an entire phenomenon lurking in the outer reaches of space which we must do everything to stop, including keeping our troops cheerful in the face of possible despair. One day, when you're a little more experienced, you'll understand that tragedies are a part of life - our job is to move on and create new futures.'

Starlight remained standing at attention as she took in these words. Then Lawgiver appeared to soften, and sighed.

'Look,' she said, 'you're called Starlight, correct? Miss Starlight? I've been watching you. I've put something together for you.' She turned, and, with a wave of her hand, a box floated across the room into her arms. She passed it across to Starlight. 'Open it.'

Starlight removed the box lid. Inside lay a glittering gold costume, inlaid with precious stones.

'Put it on, dear,' Lawgiver said, and Starlight went into a nearby booth and changed into the gleaming outfit. It fit perfectly, as far as she could tell - but she refused to look in the mirror that was provided in the booth.





'You see, we're not completely useless, we Class 1 types,' Lawgiver said, sipping a cocktail as she admired Starlight in the new costume, beckoning to her to turn around. 'I've done my research; I know about those orbs you can generate. I can see promise in you. One day, you might even graduate to Class I yourself. Now, don't bother thanking me - just be about your business, obey my husband as the commander of this operation, and create your own future.'

In her tent afterwards, Starlight caught a glimpse of herself in a reflective battleshield. She was shocked by the transformation the costume had created - she looked indeed like one of the top class of enhanced beings who now dominated human life across the Empire. She blushed and wondered if Lawgiver and the Admiral had a point - perhaps it was better not to dwell on tragedy but to move on and create new life.

\*

\*

The celebrations went ahead as scheduled, even though the cannon was not quite finished. Starlight found herself caught up with waitress duties, handing out food and drinks to attending guests, mainly the elite of Aerda - none of the families she had met were there, nor were there any representatives from the Aerda lower classes. But the festivities were so bright and cheerful that Starlight was able to push her dark thoughts aside and she soon found that she had drunk too much of the powerful Aerda wine.

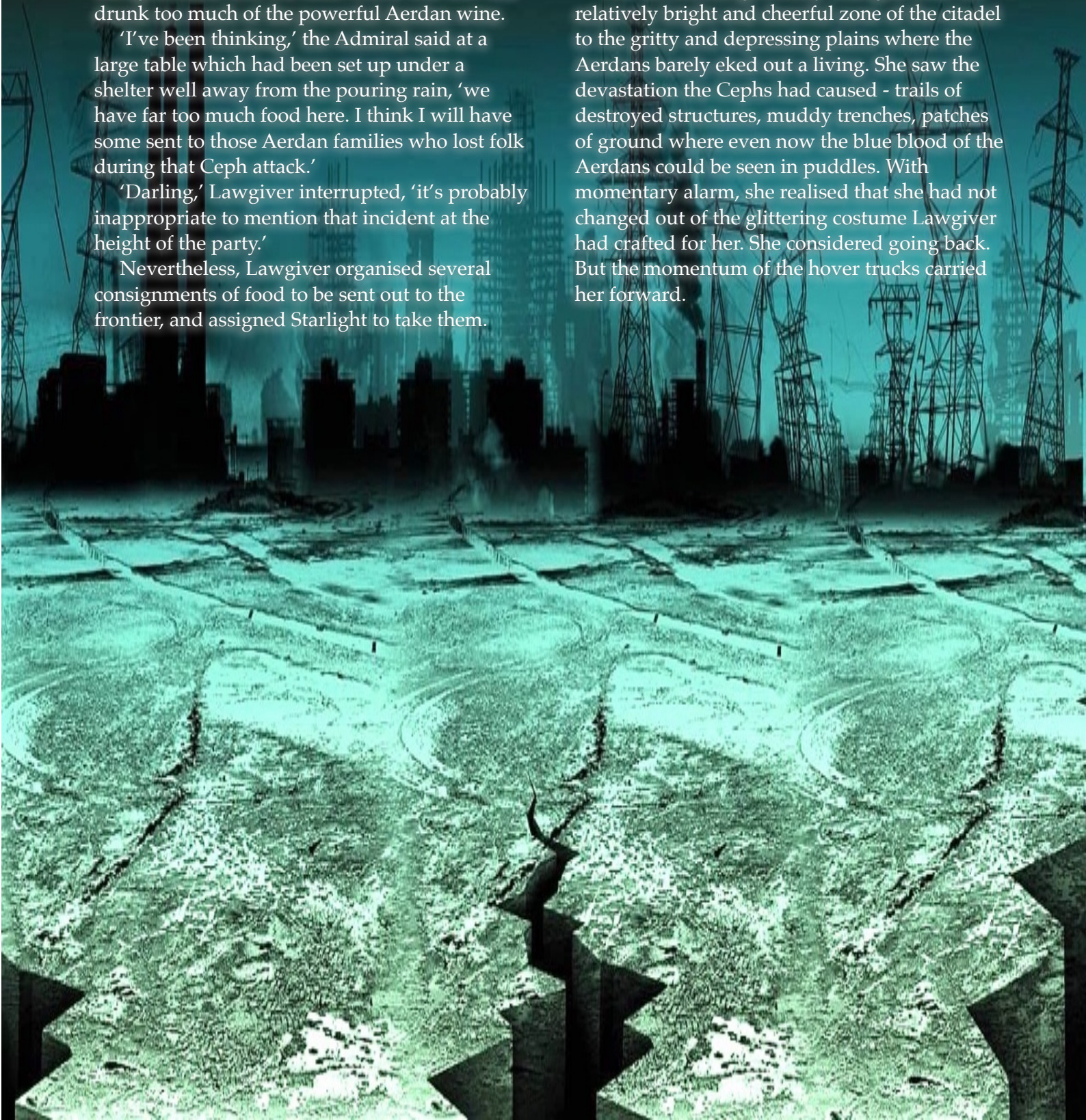
'I've been thinking,' the Admiral said at a large table which had been set up under a shelter well away from the pouring rain, 'we have far too much food here. I think I will have some sent to those Aerda families who lost folk during that Ceph attack.'

'Darling,' Lawgiver interrupted, 'it's probably inappropriate to mention that incident at the height of the party.'

Nevertheless, Lawgiver organised several consignments of food to be sent out to the frontier, and assigned Starlight to take them.

Starlight, still feeling a little under the weather after the wine, felt balked by the orders. She had no desire to revisit the utterly grim and poverty-stricken region where the earth wall had totally failed to deter the Ceph. The whole area was connected in her mind to thoughts which she had almost managed to forget entirely. The next morning, however, she found herself leading a convoy of slender hover-trucks out to the barren settlements, loaded with supplies of various kinds.

The surroundings swiftly changed from the relatively bright and cheerful zone of the citadel to the gritty and depressing plains where the Aerdans barely eked out a living. She saw the devastation the Ceph had caused - trails of destroyed structures, muddy trenches, patches of ground where even now the blue blood of the Aerdans could be seen in puddles. With momentary alarm, she realised that she had not changed out of the glittering costume Lawgiver had crafted for her. She considered going back. But the momentum of the hover trucks carried her forward.





The bereaved families' homes were dark and makeshift. One of the widows' sisters guided Starlight into a tiny hovel made out of discarded planks. The universal Aerdan rain, which the citadel folk had managed to somehow deny with roofs and sheltered walkways, here trickled and dripped everywhere.

A widow sat by a small coal fire. Starlight remembered that the Aerdans did not weep over loss, but kept total silence, thinking that in that way they would hear any whispered messages that the deceased might convey to them from beyond death.

The widow did not seem to understand why Starlight was there. Her blue Aerdan eyes, already dark with grief, glimmered with puzzlement.

'She will not speak with you,' the sister said. 'It is our way.'

Starlight nodded, feeling weak and helpless. She offered a basket of food which she had carried from the truck. Nothing was said. Then the sister led Starlight to another rough shelter, in which a number of bodies had been laid in the mud, covered with rags.

'These are those we saved from the mutated ones,' the sister said.

With an inward gasp, Starlight realised that not only had many of the dead been consumed by the invading Ceph, but that the creatures themselves had once been ordinary Aerdans, twisted into horrible monsters by the advancing power of the distant Nega Wave.

The sister went to lift the rag covering one of the bodies. Starlight flinched away.

'Please,' she said, 'there is no need for me to intrude further into your grief.'

But the sister carried on, removing the dark rag.

The dead Aerdan face looked up at Starlight, its shining blue eyes still open. It was Alalda. Starlight felt dizzy - or rather, she felt as though she was standing perfectly still and the whole space around her was swirling.

'She looks as though she is dreaming,' she said aloud, wondering at her own words.

'She is,' the sister said. 'She dreams between forms. We keep silent that we might hear the music of her dreams.'

Starlight sobbed - a single deep, breathless sob which seemed dredged from unexplored depths of her own soul.

'Forgive me,' she whispered, unsure if the words actually emerged from her lips.

\*

Back at the citadel, Starlight paced along one of the covered walkways, her mind empty.

'Starlight!' a voice cried.

She turned - Fortiv was running towards her.

'I've been looking for you,' Fortiv said. 'The cannon has been finished. The Admiral says he's ready to fire it - he will need your light.'

Immediately, unhesitatingly, Starlight hugged Fortiv, a tight clasp which she didn't want to break.

'How...how was the visit?' Fortiv asked, holding Starlight's shoulders.

'I... it was tremendous,' Starlight said.

'Tremendous.'

Fortiv stepped back.

'All right then,' she said, puzzled. 'Come. We need you.'

This story first appeared in  
**Superheroic Stories** by Alexander  
Marshall - see next page for details.

# CLARENDON HOUSE AUTHOR ALEXANDER MARSHALL

Who is Miss Starlight?  
And can her  
tremendous powers  
prevent the Nega Wave  
from overwhelming  
Earth?

Chicago, 1942: the  
dawn of the Atomic  
Age. Private  
Investigator John  
McLeod has to find out  
what gangster moll  
Carol Wyland's terribly  
scarred arm has to do  
with a Nazi conspiracy  
to create superhumans  
on American soil,  
before it's too late.

What is the dreadful  
mystery of the lonely  
streaming station of  
Kern, far out in space?

The Eye of Lyubov, a  
mysterious artefact in  
the heart of Siberia: will  
Ursula Stone, uniquely  
trained agent from the  
British Museum's  
Department of Select  
Antiquities, be able to  
obtain it before she  
freezes to death?

Waking after two  
million years of  
quantum displacement,  
will Senior Technician  
O'Malley be able to  
work out why the Red  
Seven Ark has overshot  
its target and is deep in  
intergalactic space?

The 25th Century:  
Earth rules over a  
hundred worlds  
assisted by the  
superpowers of the  
Enhanced Class. But is  
there something  
fundamentally rotten at  
the core of the system?  
A cosmic entity known  
as the Challenger has  
arrived with one  
question: Who exactly  
is responsible for the  
death of the woman  
without a name?

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# At The Back Of The North Wind

## by George MacDonald

### Chapter 4: North Wind

AND as she stood looking towards London, Diamond saw that she was trembling.

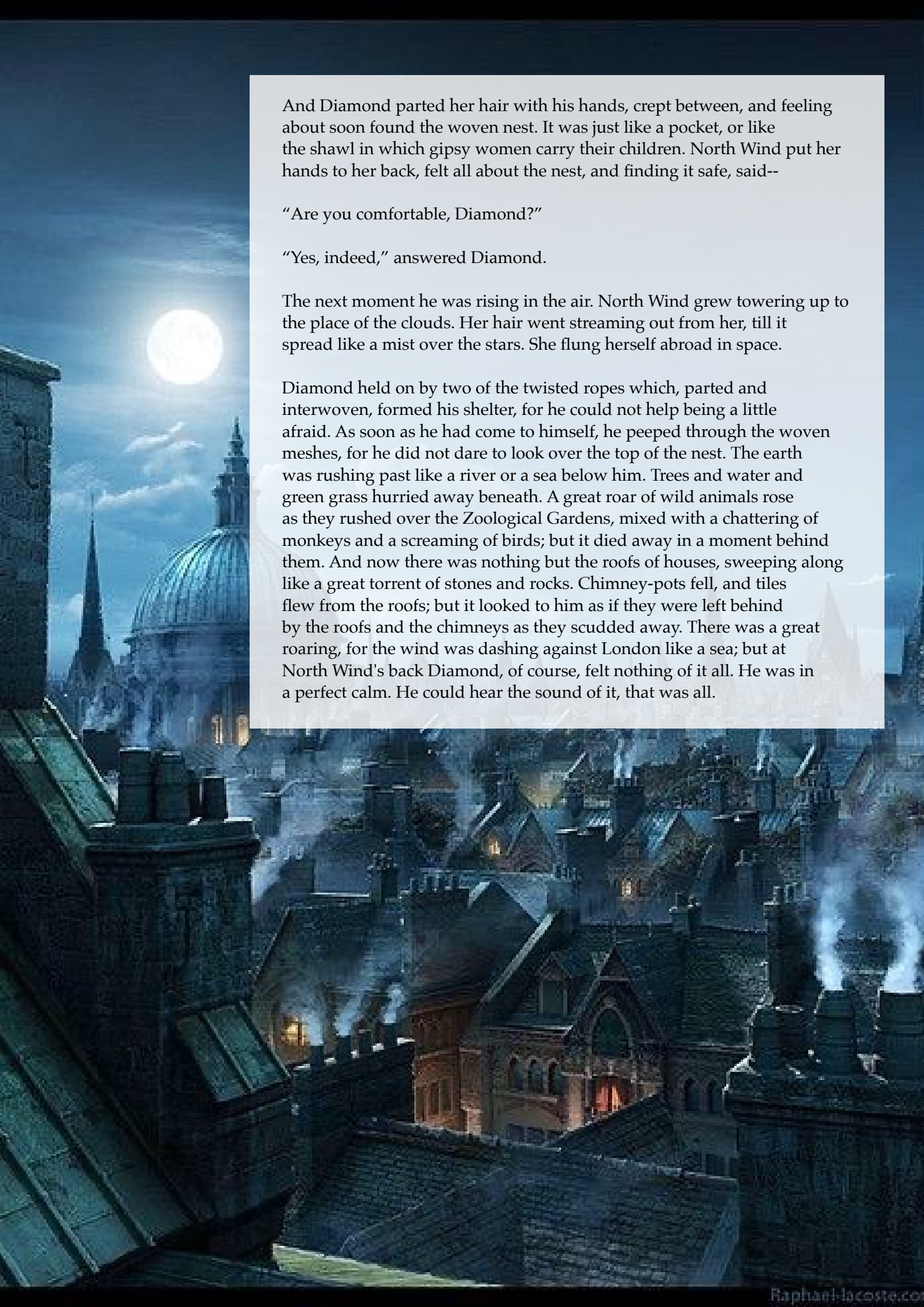
“Are you cold, North Wind?” he asked.

“No, Diamond,” she answered, looking down upon him with a smile; “I am only getting ready to sweep one of my rooms. Those careless, greedy, untidy children make it in such a mess.”

As she spoke he could have told by her voice, if he had not seen with his eyes, that she was growing larger and larger. Her head went up and up towards the stars; and as she grew, still trembling through all her body, her hair also grew--longer and longer, and lifted itself from her head, and went out in black waves. The next moment, however, it fell back around her, and she grew less and less till she was only a tall woman. Then she put her hands behind her head, and gathered some of her hair, and began weaving and knotting it together. When she had done, she bent down her beautiful face close to his, and said--

“Diamond, I am afraid you would not keep hold of me, and if I were to drop you, I don't know what might happen; so I have been making a place for you in my hair. Come.”

Diamond held out his arms, for with that grand face looking at him, he believed like a baby. She took him in her hands, threw him over her shoulder, and said, “Get in, Diamond.”

A night view of a city, likely London, with a large dome and many chimneys emitting smoke. The scene is illuminated by a full moon and some city lights. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box.

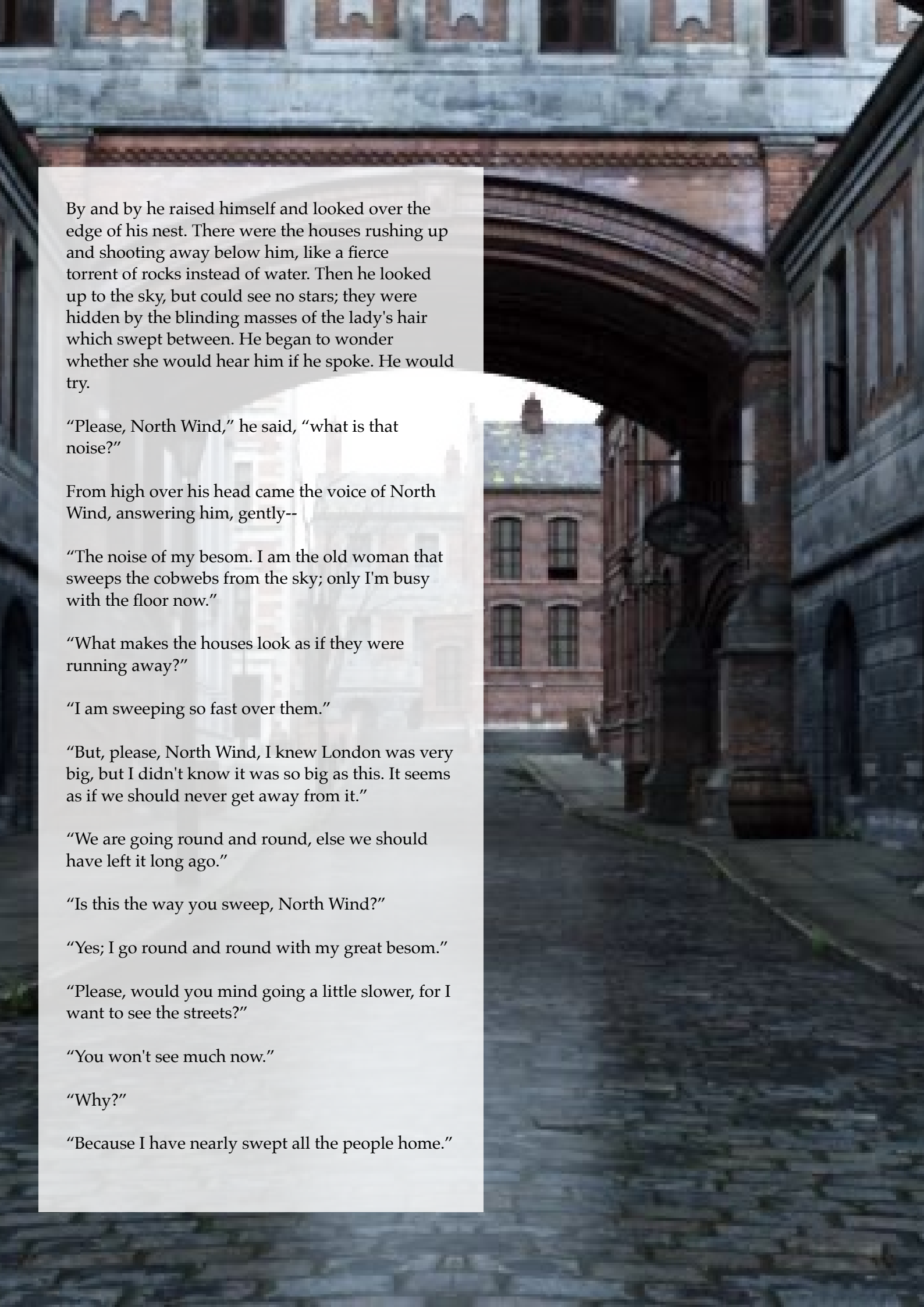
And Diamond parted her hair with his hands, crept between, and feeling about soon found the woven nest. It was just like a pocket, or like the shawl in which gipsy women carry their children. North Wind put her hands to her back, felt all about the nest, and finding it safe, said--

“Are you comfortable, Diamond?”

“Yes, indeed,” answered Diamond.

The next moment he was rising in the air. North Wind grew towering up to the place of the clouds. Her hair went streaming out from her, till it spread like a mist over the stars. She flung herself abroad in space.

Diamond held on by two of the twisted ropes which, parted and interwoven, formed his shelter, for he could not help being a little afraid. As soon as he had come to himself, he peeped through the woven meshes, for he did not dare to look over the top of the nest. The earth was rushing past like a river or a sea below him. Trees and water and green grass hurried away beneath. A great roar of wild animals rose as they rushed over the Zoological Gardens, mixed with a chattering of monkeys and a screaming of birds; but it died away in a moment behind them. And now there was nothing but the roofs of houses, sweeping along like a great torrent of stones and rocks. Chimney-pots fell, and tiles flew from the roofs; but it looked to him as if they were left behind by the roofs and the chimneys as they scudded away. There was a great roaring, for the wind was dashing against London like a sea; but at North Wind's back Diamond, of course, felt nothing of it all. He was in a perfect calm. He could hear the sound of it, that was all.



By and by he raised himself and looked over the edge of his nest. There were the houses rushing up and shooting away below him, like a fierce torrent of rocks instead of water. Then he looked up to the sky, but could see no stars; they were hidden by the blinding masses of the lady's hair which swept between. He began to wonder whether she would hear him if he spoke. He would try.

"Please, North Wind," he said, "what is that noise?"

From high over his head came the voice of North Wind, answering him, gently--

"The noise of my besom. I am the old woman that sweeps the cobwebs from the sky; only I'm busy with the floor now."

"What makes the houses look as if they were running away?"

"I am sweeping so fast over them."

"But, please, North Wind, I knew London was very big, but I didn't know it was so big as this. It seems as if we should never get away from it."

"We are going round and round, else we should have left it long ago."

"Is this the way you sweep, North Wind?"

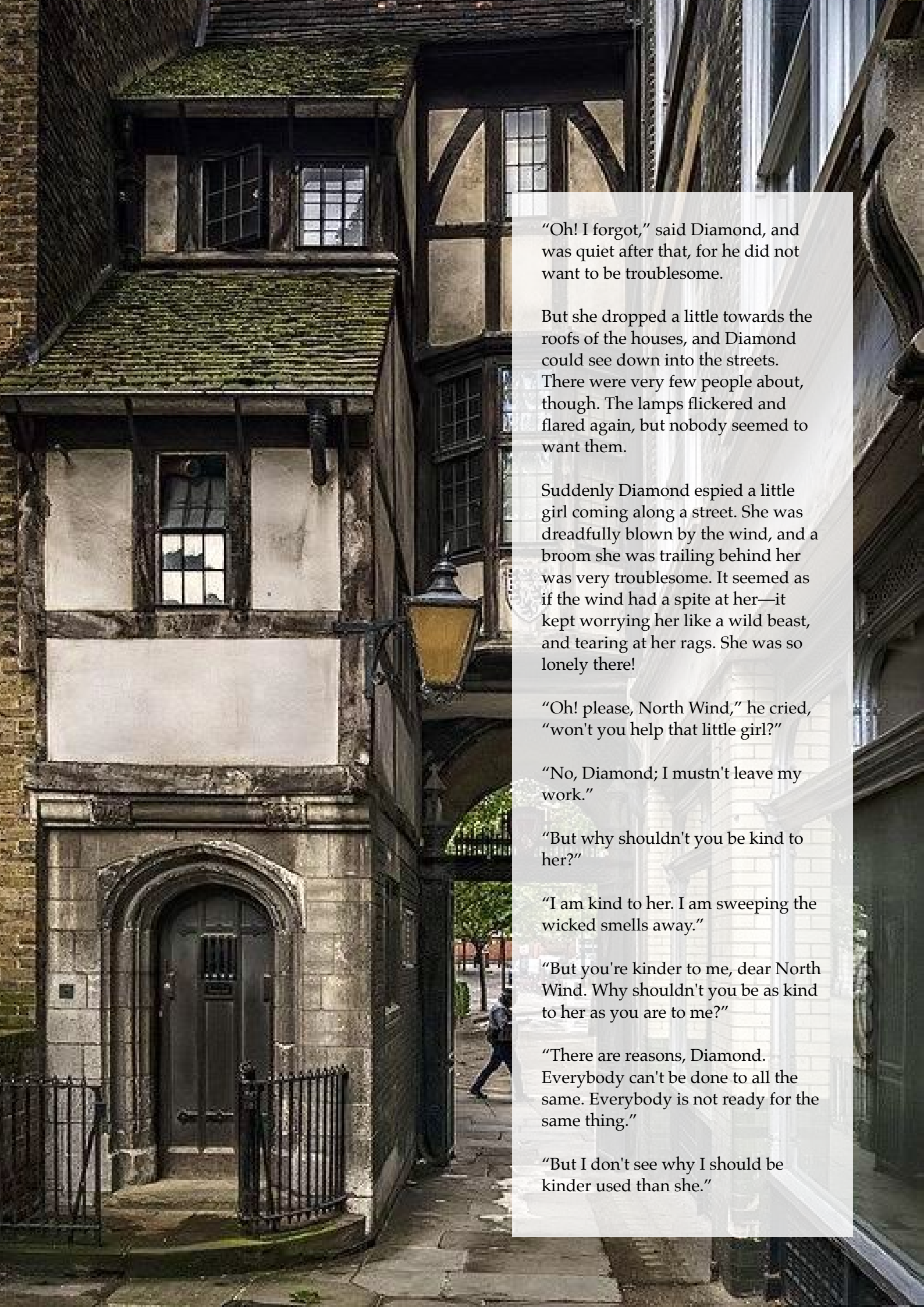
"Yes; I go round and round with my great besom."

"Please, would you mind going a little slower, for I want to see the streets?"

"You won't see much now."

"Why?"

"Because I have nearly swept all the people home."



"Oh! I forgot," said Diamond, and was quiet after that, for he did not want to be troublesome.

But she dropped a little towards the roofs of the houses, and Diamond could see down into the streets. There were very few people about, though. The lamps flickered and flared again, but nobody seemed to want them.

Suddenly Diamond espied a little girl coming along a street. She was dreadfully blown by the wind, and a broom she was trailing behind her was very troublesome. It seemed as if the wind had a spite at her—it kept worrying her like a wild beast, and tearing at her rags. She was so lonely there!

"Oh! please, North Wind," he cried, "won't you help that little girl?"

"No, Diamond; I mustn't leave my work."

"But why shouldn't you be kind to her?"

"I am kind to her. I am sweeping the wicked smells away."

"But you're kinder to me, dear North Wind. Why shouldn't you be as kind to her as you are to me?"

"There are reasons, Diamond. Everybody can't be done to all the same. Everybody is not ready for the same thing."

"But I don't see why I should be kinder used than she."



"Do you think nothing's to be done but what you can see, Diamond, you silly! It's all right. Of course you can help her if you like. You've got nothing particular to do at this moment; I have."

"Oh! do let me help her, then. But you won't be able to wait, perhaps?"

"No, I can't wait; you must do it yourself. And, mind, the wind will get a hold of you, too."

"Don't you want me to help her, North Wind?"

"Not without having some idea what will happen. If you break down and cry, that won't be much of a help to her, and it will make a goose of little Diamond."

"I want to go," said Diamond. "Only there's just one thing--how am I to get home?"

"If you're anxious about that, perhaps you had better go with me. I am bound to take you home again, if you do."

"There!" cried Diamond, who was still looking after the little girl. "I'm sure the wind will blow her over, and perhaps kill her. Do let me go."

They had been sweeping more slowly along the line of the street. There was a lull in the roaring.

"Well, though I cannot promise to take you home," said North Wind, as she sank nearer and nearer to the tops of the houses, "I can promise you it will be all right in the end. You will get home somehow. Have you made up your mind what to do?"

"Yes; to help the little girl," said Diamond firmly.



The same moment North Wind dropt into the street and stood, only a tall lady, but with her hair flying up over the housetops. She put her hands to her back, took Diamond, and set him down in the street. The same moment he was caught in the fierce coils of the blast, and all but blown away. North Wind stepped back a step, and at once towered in stature to the height of the houses. A chimney-pot clashed at Diamond's feet. He turned in terror, but it was to look for the little girl, and when he turned again the lady had vanished, and the wind was roaring along the street as if it had been the bed of an invisible torrent. The little girl was scudding before the blast, her hair flying too, and behind her she dragged her broom. Her little legs were going as fast as ever they could to keep her from falling. Diamond crept into the shelter of a doorway,

thinking to stop her; but she passed him like a bird, crying gently and pitifully.

"Stop! stop! little girl," shouted Diamond, starting in pursuit.

"I can't," wailed the girl, "the wind won't leave go of me."

Diamond could run faster than she, and he had no broom. In a few moments he had caught her by the frock, but it tore in his hand, and away went the little girl. So he had to run again, and this time he ran so fast that he got before her, and turning round caught her in his arms, when down they went both together, which made the little girl laugh in the midst of her crying.

"Where are you going?" asked Diamond, rubbing the elbow that had stuck farthest out. The arm it belonged to was twined round a lamp-post as he stood between the little girl and the wind.

"Home," she said, gasping for breath.

"Then I will go with you," said Diamond.

And then they were silent for a while, for the wind blew worse than ever, and they had both to hold on to the lamp-post.

"Where is your crossing?" asked the girl at length.

"I don't sweep," answered Diamond.

"What do you do, then?" asked she.  
"You ain't big enough for most things."

"I don't know what I do do," answered he, feeling rather ashamed. "Nothing, I suppose. My father's Mr. Coleman's coachman."

"Have you a father?" she said, staring at him as if a boy with a father was a natural curiosity.

"Yes. Haven't you?" returned Diamond.

"No; nor mother neither. Old Sal's all I've got." And she began to cry again.

"I wouldn't go to her if she wasn't good to me," said Diamond.

"But you must go somewheres."

"Move on," said the voice of a policeman behind them.



"I told you so," said the girl. "You must go somewheres. They're always at it."

"But old Sal doesn't beat you, does she?"

"I wish she would."

"What do you mean?" asked Diamond, quite bewildered.

"She would if she was my mother. But she wouldn't lie abed a-cuddlin' of her ugly old bones, and laugh to hear me crying at the door."

"You don't mean she won't let you in to-night?"

"It'll be a good chance if she does."

"Why are you out so late, then?" asked Diamond.

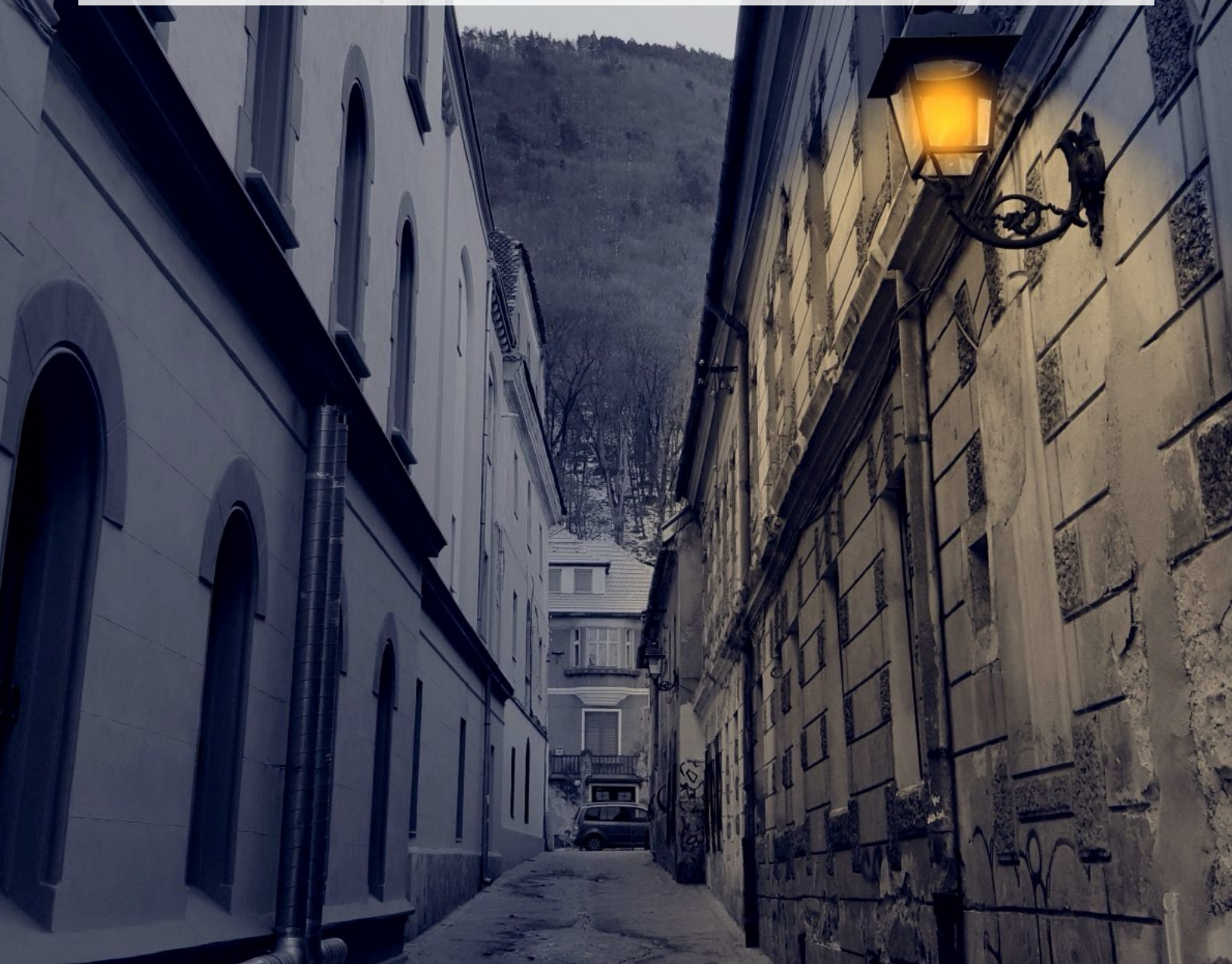
"My crossing's a long way off at the West End, and I had been indulgin' in door-steps and mewses."

"We'd better have a try anyhow," said Diamond. "Come along."

As he spoke Diamond thought he caught a glimpse of North Wind turning a corner in front of them; and when they turned the corner too, they found it quiet there, but he saw nothing of the lady.

"Now you lead me," he said, taking her hand, "and I'll take care of you."

The girl withdrew her hand, but only to dry her eyes with her frock, for the other had enough to do with her broom. She put it in his again, and led him, turning after turning, until they stopped at a cellar-door in a very dirty lane. There she knocked.



"I shouldn't like to live here," said Diamond.

"Oh, yes, you would, if you had nowhere else to go to," answered the girl. "I only wish we may get in."

"I don't want to go in," said Diamond.

"Where do you mean to go, then?"

"Home to my home."

"Where's that?"

"I don't exactly know."

"Then you're worse off than I am."

"Oh no, for North Wind--" began Diamond, and stopped, he hardly knew why.

"What?" said the girl, as she held her ear to the door listening.

But Diamond did not reply. Neither did old Sal.

"I told you so," said the girl. "She is wide awake hearkening. But we don't get in."

"What will you do, then?" asked Diamond.

"Move on," she answered.

"Where?"

"Oh, anywheres. Bless you, I'm used to it."

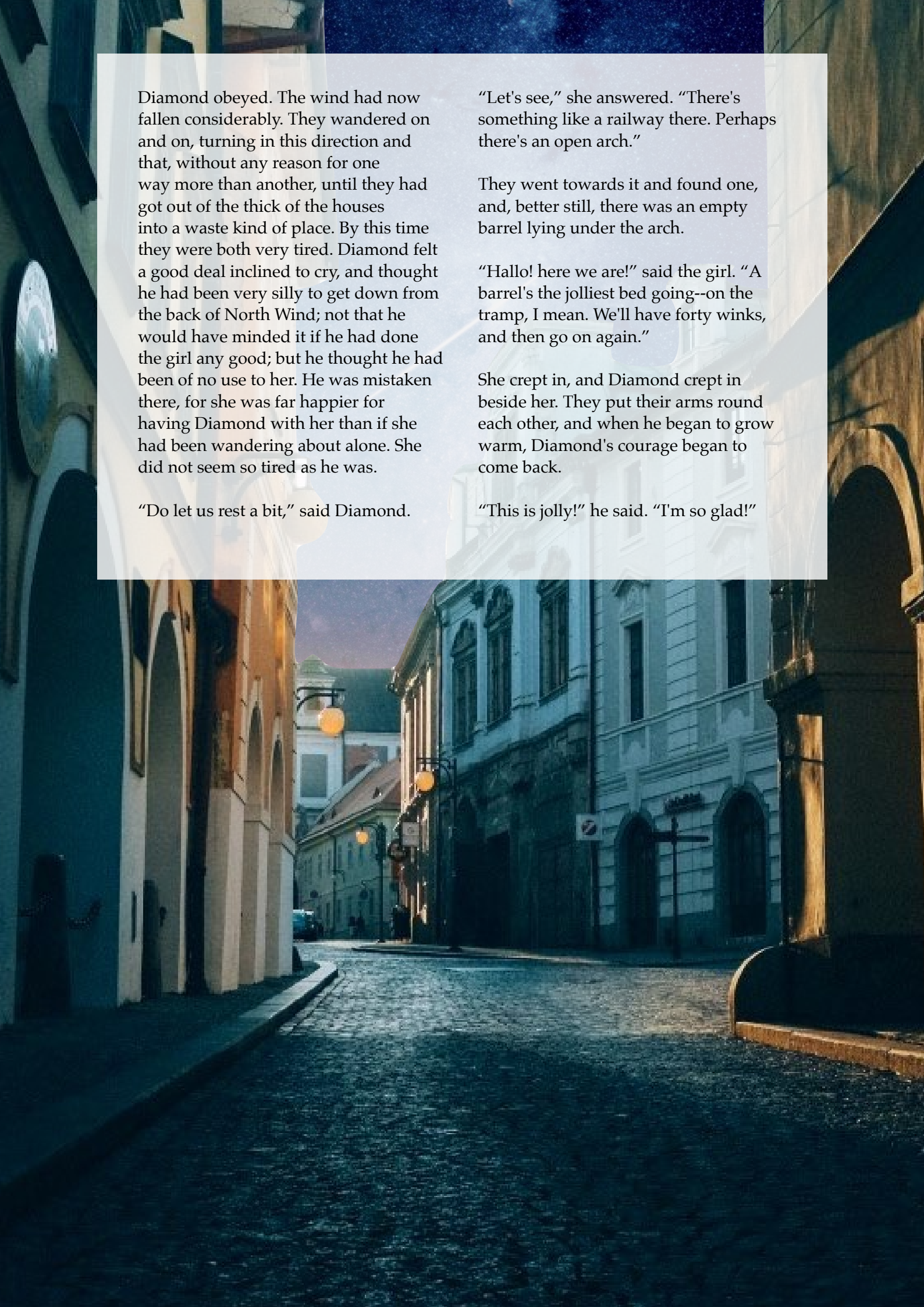
"Hadn't you better come home with me, then?"

"That's a good joke, when you don't know where it is. Come on."

"But where?"

"Oh, nowheres in particular. Come on."





Diamond obeyed. The wind had now fallen considerably. They wandered on and on, turning in this direction and that, without any reason for one way more than another, until they had got out of the thick of the houses into a waste kind of place. By this time they were both very tired. Diamond felt a good deal inclined to cry, and thought he had been very silly to get down from the back of North Wind; not that he would have minded it if he had done the girl any good; but he thought he had been of no use to her. He was mistaken there, for she was far happier for having Diamond with her than if she had been wandering about alone. She did not seem so tired as he was.

“Do let us rest a bit,” said Diamond.

“Let's see,” she answered. “There's something like a railway there. Perhaps there's an open arch.”

They went towards it and found one, and, better still, there was an empty barrel lying under the arch.

“Hallo! here we are!” said the girl. “A barrel's the jolliest bed going--on the tramp, I mean. We'll have forty winks, and then go on again.”

She crept in, and Diamond crept in beside her. They put their arms round each other, and when he began to grow warm, Diamond's courage began to come back.

“This is jolly!” he said. “I'm so glad!”

"I don't think so much of it," said the girl. "I'm used to it, I suppose. But I can't think how a kid like you comes to be out all alone this time o' night."

She called him a kid, but she was not really a month older than he was; only she had had to work for her bread, and that so soon makes people older.

"But I shouldn't have been out so late if I hadn't got down to help you," said Diamond. "North Wind is gone home long ago."

"I think you must ha' got out o' one o' them Hidget Asylms," said the girl. "You said something about the north wind afore that I couldn't get the rights of."

So now, for the sake of his character, Diamond had to tell her the whole story.

She did not believe a word of it. She said he wasn't such a flat as to believe all that bosh. But as she spoke there came a great blast of wind through the arch, and set the barrel rolling. So they made haste to get out of it, for they had no notion of being rolled over and over as if they had been packed tight and wouldn't hurt, like a barrel of herrings.

"I thought we should have had a sleep," said Diamond; "but I can't say I'm very sleepy after all. Come, let's go on again."

They wandered on and on, sometimes sitting on a door-step, but always turning into lanes or fields when they had a chance.

They found themselves at last on a rising ground that sloped rather steeply on the other side. It was a waste kind of spot below, bounded by an irregular wall, with a few doors in it. Outside lay broken things in general, from garden rollers to flower-pots and wine-bottles. But the moment they reached the brow of the rising ground, a gust of wind seized them and blew them down hill as fast as they could run. Nor could Diamond stop before he went bang against one of the doors in the wall. To his dismay it burst open. When they came to themselves they peeped in. It was the back door of a garden.





"Ah, ah!" cried Diamond, after staring for a few moments, "I thought so! North Wind takes nobody in! Here I am in master's garden! I tell you what, little girl, you just bore a hole in old Sal's wall, and put your mouth to it, and say, 'Please, North Wind, mayn't I go out with you?' and then you'll see what'll come."

"I daresay I shall. But I'm out in the wind too often already to want more of it."

"I said with the North Wind, not in it."

"It's all one."

"It's not all one."

"It is all one."

"But I know best."

"And I know better. I'll box your ears," said the girl.

Diamond got very angry. But he remembered that even if she did box his ears, he musn't box hers again, for she was a girl, and all that boys must do, if girls are rude, is to go away and leave them. So he went in at the door.

"Good-bye, mister" said the girl.

This brought Diamond to his senses.

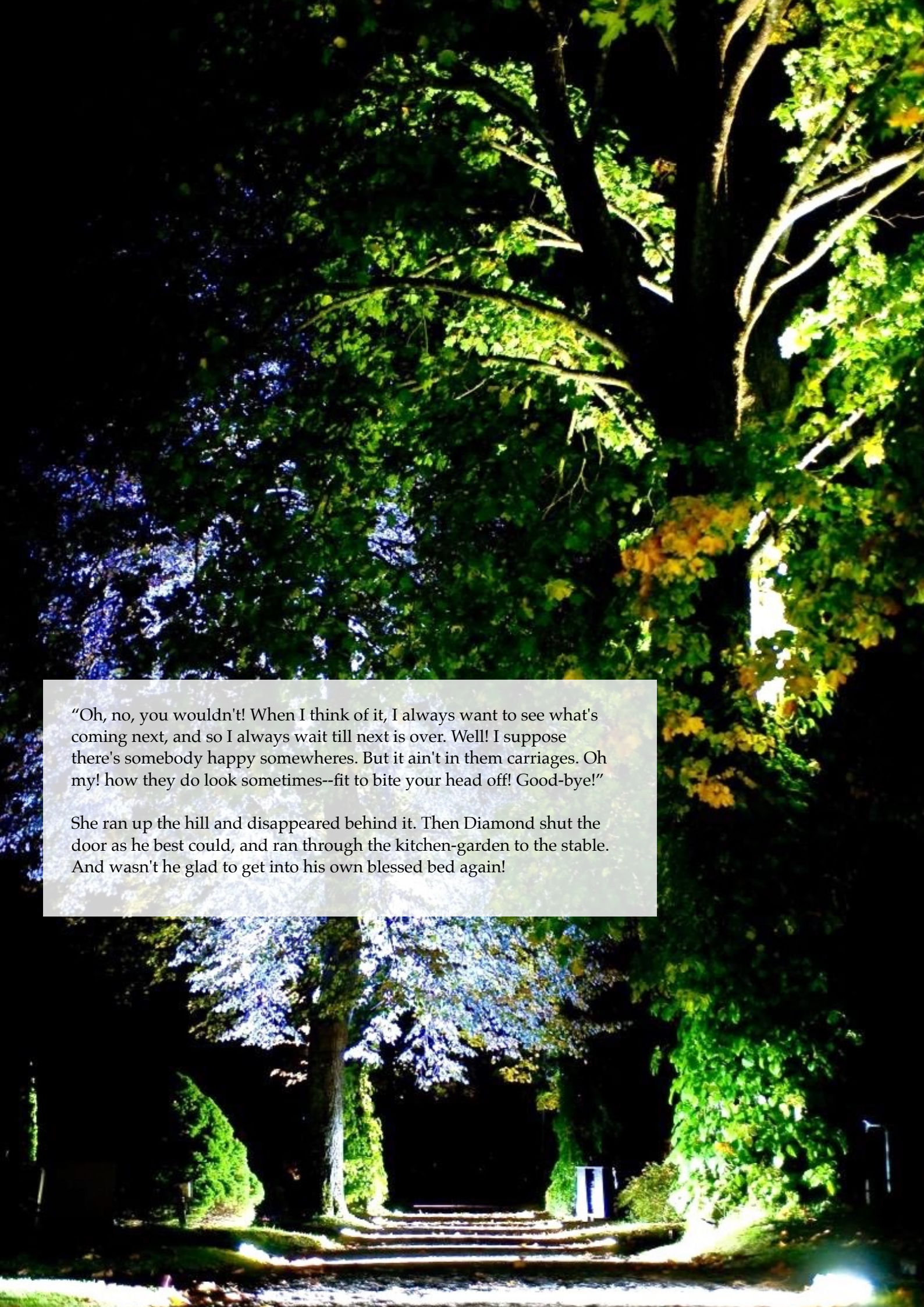
"I'm sorry I was cross," he said. "Come in, and my mother will give you some breakfast."

"No, thank you. I must be off to my crossing. It's morning now."

"I'm very sorry for you," said Diamond.

"Well, it is a life to be tired of--what with old Sal, and so many holes in my shoes."

"I wonder you're so good. I should kill myself."



"Oh, no, you wouldn't! When I think of it, I always want to see what's coming next, and so I always wait till next is over. Well! I suppose there's somebody happy somewheres. But it ain't in them carriages. Oh my! how they do look sometimes--fit to bite your head off! Good-bye!"

She ran up the hill and disappeared behind it. Then Diamond shut the door as he best could, and ran through the kitchen-garden to the stable. And wasn't he glad to get into his own blessed bed again!



Gandalf the  
**Fearful**  
Part Three

# A Window into Middle-earth



We have seen how, for much of his time in Middle-earth, Gandalf the Grey has been motivated by fear, behind the scenes and in action. Now, as *The Lord the Rings* continues, Gandalf speeds to the Shire on the stolen Shadowfax, no doubt pondering his own condition: he no longer has any kind of 'shield' between him and Sauron, the Maiar who terrifies him. With Saruman's treachery, the responsibility for Sauron's defeat is fully his own. It is a low point for the old wizard.

Fortunately, Frodo has already left the Shire and is with Strider, the suspicious Ranger. But for Gandalf this is a hope which far exceeds his expectations: his plan is going forward in others' hands. He heads for Weathertop, where he is assaulted at night by the Nazgûl, but escapes to Rivendell, where he welcomes Glorfindel, Aragorn and the hobbits upon their arrival several days later, Frodo being sorely wounded but still in

possession of the Ring. So far, so good, for the wizard's perilous plan: his scheme to use others to defeat his arch enemy is underway and has proven successful so far.

The Fellowship of the Ring is now formed; the two thousand year mission is starting to accumulate resources and a direction, but has to now overcome obstacles which have arisen due to the wizard's own long procrastination. To avoid Saruman, Gandalf decides to take a southern route to the Redhorn Pass and there to cross the Misty Mountains near Caradhras, traversing the mountain range and avoiding Isengard. This attempt fails due to a terrible storm, leaving only the dreadful option of Khazad-dûm. The creature who haunts the labyrinth, Durin's Bane, catches up to the group at the Bridge of Khazad-dûm where Gandalf realises what it is: a Balrog of Morgoth, a servant of the first Dark Lord.

But this is an interesting encounter on many levels: Gandalf is not afraid of the creature as such, though he is weary. In a spectacular display of bravery that is the closest the story reaches towards pure myth, he confronts the demon, breaks the bridge and leaves the Balrog to fall into the seemingly bottomless chasm. But he is dragged down by its whip; he and the Balrog fight in the bowels and deep places of the world for two days and nights.

Using his last measure of strength to slay the creature, Gandalf then dies, sacrificing himself to save the Fellowship. Though this all happens 'off stage' and is related later to the Fellowship as a flashback, it nevertheless shows that the wizard isn't frightened of battle, or pain, or even death as things in themselves: Gandalf is no coward.

It's only Sauron that he fears, apparently.

Why should this be the case? Balrogs are fearsome; death is also terrible. We can only speculate, but perhaps Gandalf the Maiar who walked the universe before the world was made isn't afraid of monsters or of death, but of becoming like his fellow Maiar, Sauron. The Ring's seductive power has a more possessive and intimate hold over Gandalf because through it the wizard could take on Sauron's mentality directly — hence it is even more deeply feared and rejected by him. If we see Gandalf as a protagonist, then being offered the One Ring, heart of Sauron's power, is as close as he comes to confronting his antagonist in the course of the whole tale of Middle-earth: the Balrog is just a 'sideshow'.

But this point in the story of Gandalf is where things change.

Death at the hands of the Balrog would have been a legitimate excuse for Gandalf to leave the field of battle: as far as we know, the spirits of the Maiar survive bodily death and we presume that they return to Valinor. The details of what actually happens are wisely hidden from us as readers of *The Lord of the Rings*. All we know is that, as the sole emissary of the Valar in Middle-earth, Gandalf is granted the power to be more of a Maiar when he returns to Middle-earth after death. We have to assume that the choice to return is his. Who knows what counsels took place in Manwë's halls in the Blessed Land? Perhaps Olórin was given a pep talk and shown

that so far his inactions had lengthened the conflict. We can only surmise that he was persuaded to come back and finally confront his fear of Sauron.

Gwaihir the Eagle bears his reborn body to Lothlórien, where he is clothed and replenished, and given a new staff by Galadriel. He soon learns that Frodo and Sam have left the Fellowship and are attempting the quest of Mount Doom alone. This is another key point of choice: he makes the judgement that Frodo is beyond his assistance now. Is he still motivated by the same old fears, still seeking indirect ways of dealing with Sauron, still reticent to become openly confrontational? Or is this a new Gandalf, willing to forthrightly take on his foe?





We can judge from his actions. He immediately seeks to free King Théoden from impotence, deposing Wormtongue and encouraging Théoden to ride west to war against Saruman. He then encourages Théoden to go to Helm's Deep, while he himself searches for Erkenbrand and the forces of the Westfold, which he uses to rescue Théoden and the others. Then Gandalf goes straight to Orthanc with Théoden, Aragorn, and others, breaking Saruman's staff and casting him from the Order and the Council. Without pausing for breath, Gandalf advises King Théoden to ride to Gondor's defence as soon as possible while the wizard himself races at top speed to Minas Tirith, the last bastion of the West. As soon as possible after arriving, he confronts Denethor II, the Ruling Steward, and when Faramir, the Steward's younger son,

returns from Osgiliath and is attacked by Nazgûl, Gandalf drives them away by revealing more of a deeper power within himself than ever before.

This is a new Gandalf, altogether more urgent in his motion, confrontational and determined. In effect, he becomes the 'Churchill' of Middle-earth, defiant and war-like, seeking confrontation rather than avoiding it.

Gandalf encourages the men of Minas Tirith to have hope in the face of growing numbers of enemies, dispels the fear of the Ringwraiths with his presence, and in Denethor's absence directs the defence of the city. When the gigantic ram Grond destroys the ancient entrance to the city, the wizard places himself alone at the ruined gateway, defying the Witch-king, mightiest of Sauron's minions. When the Witch-king flees at the sound of the

horns of the Riders of Rohan, Gandalf does not pursue him, but this isn't the same lack of follow-through that he was guilty of earlier — events intervene to prevent the pursuit, rather than Gandalf's inhibitions.

The forces of the men of the West then utterly defeat Sauron's attack against Minas Tirith, relieving the city and killing virtually all of the invaders. Gandalf's carefully laid plans and words of wisdom, along with others' acts of heroism, have outmanoeuvred the enemy.

In Minas Tirith, Gandalf is selected by Aragorn and others to be their leader in the coming final battles. This time he doesn't refuse the leadership role, and advises the lords to drive north to the Morannon, thereby drawing the enemy's eye away from Frodo's movements and giving the Hobbit a chance to achieve the quest of Mount Doom.



When the Mouth of Sauron reveals Frodo's mithril-coat and Arnor-blade and implies that their owner is captured and tortured, it must seem to the wizard that his earlier plan to use another to defeat the Dark Lord has come to nothing. This new action-oriented Gandalf, however, is not daunted and rejects Sauron's offer.

The Black Gate opens to reveal a vast army of orcs and trolls advancing on the lords of the West, and Gandalf must at that point have dreaded the outcome that he had feared since the beginning: the ultimate triumph of Sauron and his own imminent defeat. In terms of survival, it must have seemed to him that he had made the wrong choice: those who chose Morgoth in the beginning were succeeding; he had failed.

Of course, unbeknownst to all, Frodo and Sam have succeeded in scaling Mount Doom and even as the Battle of Morannon begins, Frodo stands at the Crack of Doom. Gandalf's foresight proves accurate; even the role of

Gollum plays out as he had foretold.

As this becomes plain, Gandalf's first thought is for the Ringbearers stranded on the slopes of Mount Doom. With his arch-enemy finally gone, two thousand years after Gandalf's arrival in Middle-earth, he mounts Gwaihir the Eagle for a third time, and sets out to rescue Frodo and Samwise.

Olórin's (Gandalf's) errand to Arda is fulfilled; after the climax of the tale, he says farewell to his friends one by one until at last only the four Hobbits remain with him. At the borders of the Shire he turns aside to talk to Tom Bombadil. What he does during the following two years is unknown. In 3021, he meets Frodo at Mithlond, ready to take the White Ship over the sea to Aman, wearing Narya the Ring of Fire openly. The ship takes him west over the sea, then on hidden straight paths to Valinor: presumably, he dwells still in the gardens of Irmo. Yes, he was the sole Istar to remain true to his mission,

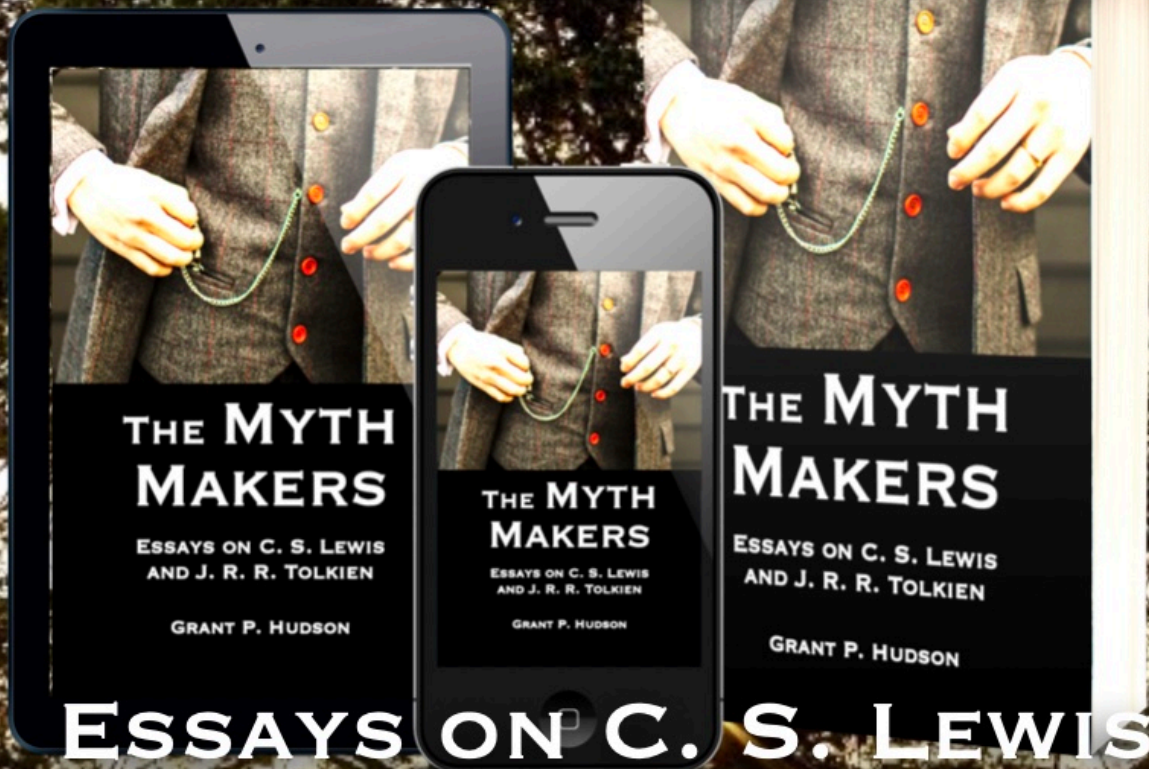
and had successfully 'kindled hearts' in the battle against Sauron. But, had he been less backed off in the first two millennia, might not this have all been accomplished sooner?

Gandalf is no coward: he confronts the Balrog, the Nazgûl and their Witch-king, and numerous other evils in the course of his adventures. The one entity he does not seek out directly is the one he was sent to combat, the one of whom he is terrified, Sauron the Maiar. Within fifty years of his arrival in Middle-earth, Gandalf, had he not been so afraid, could have ensured that the shadow that had taken residence in Dol Guldur was thoroughly investigated and driven far away; fifteen hundred years later, had he accepted the leadership of the White Council as Galadriel had recommended, Gandalf could have been more forthright and could have persuaded the Council into taking direct action, rather than leaving them to the mercies of Saruman's persuasive powers.



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