

What Is A Hero?

Farus Cate had always dreamed of being a hero, but he had no traits of one. He was physically weak, selfish, and only thought of wealth. He worked in a small shop that functioned very similar to a pawn shop. It was filled with antiques and very valuable items. It was originally his father's, but due to an accident, his father and mother died and the shop was passed to his uncle.

Farus was always seen with his childhood friend and rival, Scarlet.

"Looks like I win again." Scarlet said.

"That's only because I let you." Farus said.

Whether it was wrestling, fighting, gambling, drinking, or even eating, the two often competed against each other. Whenever these competitions would occur, Momo, would always try to stop them.

"Come on guys! Stop this silliness!" Momo yelled.

Momo was like a brother to Farus. They grew up together in the same household. Momo was adopted by Farus' parents and was brought up along with Farus.

The bonds between these three were as strong as diamonds. Nothing would be able to break them apart.

The three of them lived in the town of Starlight. Starlight was one of the biggest towns in the kingdom of Thaland as well as one of the richest. It was often prosperous and lived peacefully until one day when a stranger passed through the city. The mysterious stranger stumbled into the city, injured and dehydrated. He was wearing a

long black cloak and seemed to be trying to hide. He found his way to the pawn shop.

Farus was cleaning outside then someone suddenly knocked him over.

"Watch where you are going, you fool!" Farus yelled.

As he turned around, he saw the man on the ground.

"Hey! I demand an apology!" Farus said as he walked towards him.

When he approached the stranger, he noticed that he was out cold.

"Are you alright? Hello?" Farus asked.

He was beginning to worry. Farus picked the man up and took him inside the shop. Farus gently put him on a chair and quickly went to fetch some water. He came back with a cup of water and helped the stranger drink it. The stranger's lips were chapped; he was losing his hair, and was very thin. Farus thought that he may have been a beggar, so he went to get some food. As Farus was leaving, the man grabbed Farus' arm very tightly.

"Young man, a plague is coming." the stranger said to him.

"What? What do you mean a plague?" Farus replied.

"Take this. It is the key to life. This key will save everyone from the plague. Deep within the castle of Thaland, there is door. Take it there, and you will be able to save everyone." He said.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a jewel and gave it to Farus. After passing on the message he left in a hurry. Farus was delighted. He stared at the jewel and examined it closely. It was flawless. Never before has he seen such a perfect and magnificent item. It was all his. Farus did not even take into consideration what the man had said to him.

"What plague? He is a crazy old man. I'm going to be rich now!" Farus said to himself.

Farus continued cleaning and headed into town. As he was walking, he noticed a crowd that was gathering. He decided to go see what the commotion was all about. Farus made his way through into the crowd and saw the old man. He was dead. His mouth was wide open. A strange black liquid oozed out from his eyes, nose, and mouth. The sight was horrifying. Farus turned around and felt a cold shiver down his spine. He walked slowly away. Gripping the jewel tightly, he thought about what the man said.

"What if it's true? What am I supposed to do?" Farus thought to himself.

Scarlet was among the crowd and spotted Farus. She ran over to him.

"Farus! Wait up!" Scarlet yelled from across the road.

"Did you see that man? That is a terrible way to go." Scarlet said.

Farus turned slowly and Scarlet saw the cold and terrified look on his face.

"Farus, what is wrong? Are you alright?" Scarlet asked.

Farus took her hand and went back to the pawn shop. He began explaining the details of what happened earlier. Farus told of her of the man, the jewel, and the plague. Scarlet's expression changed and she began to shiver with fear. For awhile, nothing was said. There was only silence. Scarlet stood up.

"We have to find that door." Scarlet said.

"And how are we going to do that? You know that it is impossible to enter the castle." Farus said.

"Well, we can't let everyone die!" Scarlet yelled.

Scarlet and Farus paced around the room. Neither one said a thing. Momo came in the room. He stared at the two confused.

"Competing again? What game are you two playing this time?" Momo asked.

Neither of them answered him. He looked at the two of them with curiosity.

Eventually, everyone went to their rooms.

Morning arrived. The whole town awoke to screams. Farus, Scarlet, and Momo ran outside together to see what the problem was. A woman was crying. Her child had died. When the three of them looked at the child, he looked the same as the old man. That black liquid oozing from the eyes, nose, and mouth. Farus and Scarlet began to shiver. Their eyes were wide, and they were shaking. The three went back to the shop and Momo could see that something was wrong.

"Alright, I know you two know something. Tell me what it is." Momo demanded.

They explained to Momo. As the explanation went deeper, Momo began to feel the hairs on his arms rise. Momo thought about the woman's child and began thinking of what would happen to them.

"What are we to do?" Momo asked.

"We have to find that door. It's the only way to save everyone." Scarlet said.

"How do we even know that this is real? It is probably someone poisoning the people. Think about it. The jewel could be worth a lot!" Farus explained.

Momo and Scarlet looked at Farus with disbelief. They couldn't believe that Farus would think about money during such a time. The both of them walked away.

"Fine, believe what you want! I'll keep the money for myself when I sell the jewel!" Farus yelled.

He was furious, but at the same time, scared. He didn't know what to believe. The only thing that mattered to him was the jewel.

Later that night, he fell asleep. He had a nightmare. Scarlet and Momo were sick, and they were getting worse every second. They started to cough the black liquid and eventually it began oozing from their eyes, nose, and mouth. Farus awakened. He was breathing deeply, and was covered in sweat. A thunderous roar made him jump. It was raining very heavily outside. He closed his window and sat on his bed. Farus began to worry.

"I can't let Scarlet and Momo die." Farus thought.

As soon as morning came, Farus rushed straight to the castle gates. He demanded to seek council with the king.

"I need to see the king now." Farus demanded.

The guards at the gate shoved him away without even answering him. Farus grew impatient and furious. He tried to charge through the guards, but they held him back.

"Get out of here! The king is ill and does not want to see anyone. Especially a commoner such as you! Be gone, before you are arrested!" The guard yelled.

Farus walked away angrily. He went back to the pawn shop. Farus entered his room and began packing. He grabbed rope and dark clothing. His plan was to sneak into the castle to find the door. The only thing on Farus' mind was to save Scarlet and Momo. He could care less about the others. Momo and Scarlet walked into his room.

"Where are you going, Farus?" Scarlet asked.

Farus stopped. He glanced at Scarlet, but he did not answer her. He continued to pack and when he finished, he left the shop. Neither Momo, nor Scarlet knew what he was up to. The only thing they could do was to let him go.

Night fell. The town was quiet and the castle gates were shut tightly. Farus was waiting for his chance to climb the walls of the gates. As soon as the guards moved to secure other passageways, Farus tossed the rope he brought over the castle gate. He hid inside a bush. Suddenly, someone grabbed him and covered his mouth, so that he could not scream. Farus struggled, but was eventually overpowered. He looked up and saw a woman with a mask. When he got up, she removed her mask. It was Scarlet.

"Scarlet! What are you doing here?" Farus whispered.

"Same thing could be said to you! Why did you not tell us?" Scarlet asked.

"I have my reason. Now, go back." Farus said.

"No way, you are not having all the fun to yourself." Scarlet said.

She laughed and so did Farus. The both of them continued their search for a way into the castle. They found a wall which could be climbed. They climbed to a window and entered inside. The hallways were lit with many torches and candles. There were no guards. It was strange. Scarlet and Farus both held hands as they crept through the castle.

As they continued along their path, they came upon a huge door. It was magnificent. The both of them thought that this was the door they had been searching for. They opened the door and went inside. There were treasures all over. Farus looked around and stumbled over something. It was a body. Farus looked to see who it was. It was the king. He had died the same way as the child and the old man. A door suddenly

opened. A young girl walked into the room. It was the king's daughter. She saw Farus on top of the king's body and she screamed.

"No! Murderers! Guards help!" she cried.

Voices and footsteps could be heard from the hallways.

"Princess Lona is in trouble! To the king's chamber!" someone yelled.

The only thing Farus and Scarlet could do was hold the Princess hostage. They stood between the guards and ordered them to let them pass.

"Let us pass." Scarlet said as she held a knife to Lona's throat.

The guards had no choice, but to let them pass. When they got out of the room, Farus closed the door quickly and barricaded it with chairs. The three ran as fast as they could. When they knew they were safe, they stopped to catch their breaths.

"Let me go you savages! You murdered my father!" Lona cried.

Scarlet, tired of yelling punched Lona, knocking her out cold.

"What an unpleasant child." Scarlet said.

"We need to find that door, or else..." Farus stopped talking.

"Or else what?" asked Scarlet.

Farus felt something moving inside his pocket. He grabbed it and pulled it out. It was the jewel. It was glowing, much like a heart beat. Then it happened. The jewel started to float. Farus and Scarlet both stared in disbelief.

"What is it?" Scarlet asked.

"I am Meta, the guardian of the divine realm." It said.

"Farus! It spoke!" Scarlet exclaimed.

"Can you lead us to the door?" Farus asked.

"I can, but only those with a heart as pure as glass may receive help from the divine ones." It said.

"Please, take us there." Farus begged.

"I will do as you wish." It replied.

Meta began heading deeper into the castle. Farus and Scarlet carried Lona as they followed it deep into the castle.

"Are you sure it is safe to trust it?" asked Scarlet.

Farus didn't answer, for he knew what would happen if he didn't find the door in time. Meta led them to a dead end.

"We have arrived." said Meta.

Farus and Scarlet stared blankly at the wall of concrete.

"What do you mean? I don't see a door at all!" Farus yelled.

Meta began to glow again. Suddenly, the walls began to shake and the concrete began to crumble. A portal like door appeared from the wall in front of them. It emitted a strong light and warmth. As they were about to enter, Scarlet began to cough. Her arms were weak and she felt nauseous. Farus turned and tears began running down from his eyes.

"No! No! Scarlet! Stay with me! We are here! We found the door!" cried Farus.

"It was fun while it lasted. Isn't that right, Farus? Scarlet laughed.

She fainted. Farus grabbed Scarlet and entered the door. Everything became white. It was almost as if time had stopped for a second. Farus woke up and looked around. It was a completely different world. Crystals covered every inch of the room that he was in. Marble floors and columns were all around. Farus look at Scarlet.

"I promise that I'll save you." Farus said.

"Welcome." said a voice.

Farus looked up and saw a man wearing a glowing white robe. He looked like a king.

"Who are you?" Farus asked.

"Have you forgotten me already?" He asked.

"Are you... Meta?" Farus asked.

"Why yes. I am Meta." He chuckled.

"You are selfish as well as greedy. Do you think that you have a pure heart?" Meta asked.

"I do not, but all I know is that I want to save everyone from this plague." Farus said.

"You want to save everyone? Why? Is it because she is sick? I have reason to believe that if she was not sick, you would not have said what you have just said." Meta said.

"Please. Save us. I need your help. We need your help." Farus cried.

"I will help you, but nothing comes free. You of all people should know that, Farus." Meta said.

"What do you want from me? Money? Antiques? I will give you anything you want." Farus said.

"I do not value these things, nor do I want them. There are laws in nature. Life is apart of it. In order to give life, something in equal value must be returned." Meta explained.

"What is equivalent to life?" Farus asked.

"The only thing equivalent to life is life itself." Meta said.

Farus stared at Meta. His eyes filled with tears and he looked at Scarlet again.

"I swore that I would save you." Farus whispered.

He looked at Meta once again.

"I will trade my life in exchange for everyone else." said Farus.

Meta was surprised. He did not expect Farus, a greedy and selfish young man to be so generous.

"You have proven yourself to me. You have exceeded my expectations, Farus. I believed that you would have given up someone else's life in exchange, but you have given up your own. Even for the sake of those that you do not know, you have sacrificed yourself, so that others may live and prosper. You have shown me that you are indeed a hero. So be it. I will save everyone." Meta said.

Meta closed his eyes and began to chant. A blinding light filled the room and everything disappeared.

Farus awakened in his bed. He got up as soon as he could and rushed to Scarlet's room. She was sleeping there peacefully. He studied her face, and realized how much he really loved her. He kissed her on the forehead and quietly exited the room. Farus then went to Momo's room. Snoring loudly, but sleep peacefully laid Momo. Farus looked at Momo. He thought of all the good times they had together. Farus left Momo's room and headed downstairs. He looked all around and closed his eyes. Farus began thinking of every single memory he has had. Scarlet yawned while walking downstairs.

"I had the craziest dream. We raided the castle and I punched the princess. I feel so awesome." laughed Scarlet.

"My hands hurt though. I think I did punch something." Scarlet said.

Farus stared at her. He stood and went over to her. Farus stared into her eyes and held her hands tightly. He smiled gently and hugged her. For awhile, the two of them stood still. No words were spoken. Farus backed away slightly so that he could see her face.

"You are beautiful. You know that?" Farus said with a smile.

"Are you okay?" Scarlet asked.

"Perfect." Farus replied.

Momo came down and saw the two of them together.

"Isn't that cute?" Momo laughed.

"The two famous rivals having a romantic morning." Momo said.

"That is right my friend. I have lost. Truce?" Farus said.

"Truce." Scarlet replied.

"Let's go get something to eat." said Momo.

"You guys go ahead. I'll clean up here." Farus said.

They left to get some breakfast. Farus watched as they left. He sat back down in his chair and closed his eyes.

"I am a hero." Farus said to himself.

He laughed and praised himself. He took one last look around the shop.

"Mom. Dad. Your son is coming to join you both. We are finally going to be a happy family again." Farus smiled.