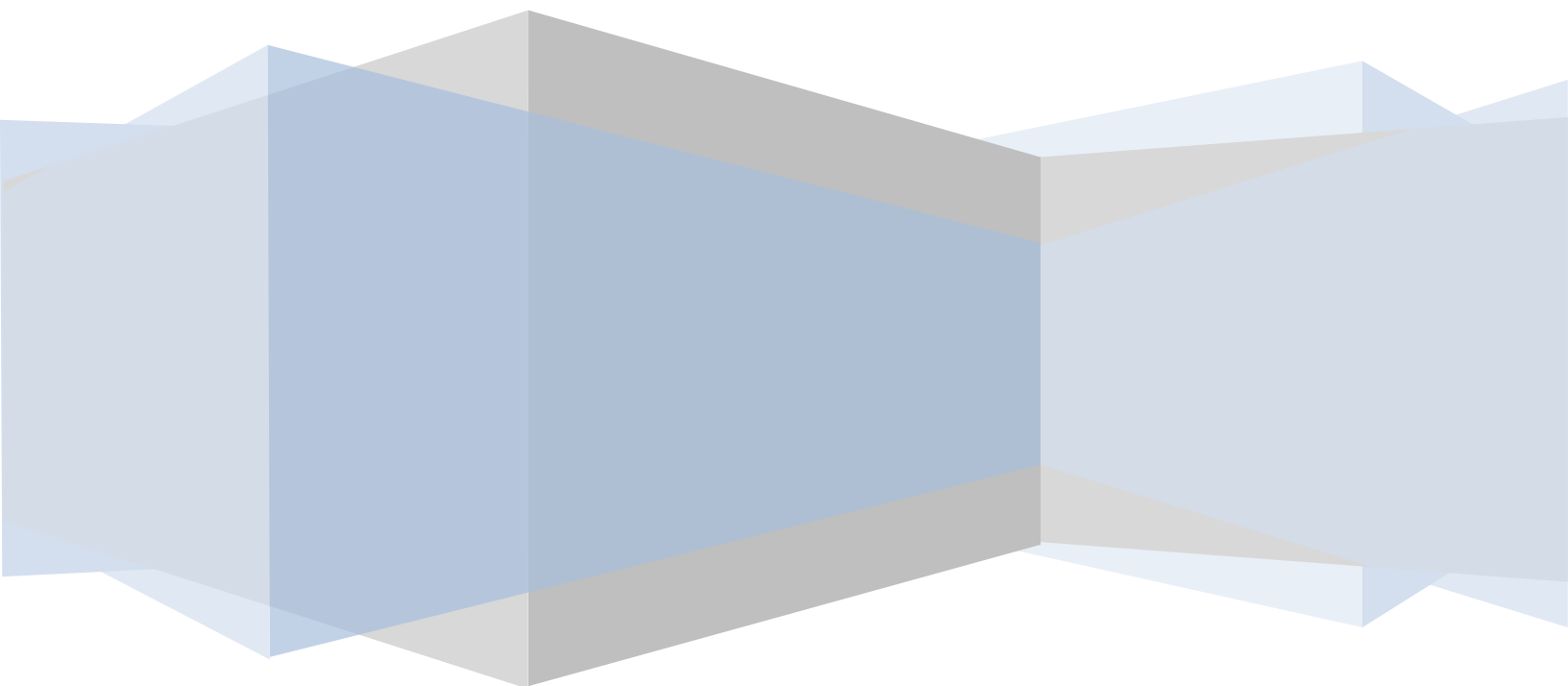# Forgotten Memories

Pickering Library Short Story Contest 2017

By Evan Tome – Grade 6

Forgotten Memories

I picked up the small gold key that had just fallen from my pocket. I thought for a moment but I couldn't remember anything. Where was I? Who was I? I felt as if I had just woken up after an endless sleep. I looked around me. I was inside a dark cave with an opening that let in a glowing light. Beside me I could see a metal sword with a gold hilt, and metallic armour, which I presumed were for me. High on a nearby hill I saw the wall of an enormous stone castle. Perhaps someone at the castle would have more information for me. I climbed to the top of the hill as fast as I could. At the front of the castle was a large stone gate with golden doors. I went through the doors, snuck past the guards and found my way into the castle.

I found the King's throne room, which was surrounded with red curtains draping over the entrance. The room had a stone floor, many piles of gold, and a large reddish-brown throne. The gold revealed the king's wealth and signified great power. In the corner there was a treasure chest covered in rubies and sapphires with a gold lock that glared at me. As I looked around the room, there was an unexplained feeling of familiarity about it.

The King was sitting on his grand throne. He was a tall, middle-aged man. He wore a red robe with red pants. He had a shining gold crown on his head and had a long brown beard and pointy nose. His black curly hair showed from under his crown. In a deep voice, he asked "Greetings, who may you be and why have you come to see King Darkus?" There was something unexplainably peculiar about the King that gave me an uneasy feeling. I answered without revealing my entire story. "I have come to ask you who I may be. I woke up with no memory and no idea of who I am." The King was silent for a moment. "You have no memory of who you are? You must be one of my new recruits for my army, of course. You probably bumped your head while training."

"Your first task for me is to go outside of the castle gates, keep on walking straight until you see a small village with animals and crops. The village goes by the name of Milrard. Go there and fetch me some wild carrots. Use these coins to pay." He handed me a few silver coins. "If you pass this quest, you may make your way into my grand army." The task seemed very simple, too simple.

I began my journey to Milrard wondering why the castle seemed so familiar to me and how I knew the way to the King's throne room. The darkness was consuming the sky as it was becoming night. I convinced myself the noises I heard were just the branches rattling and the grass rustling,

I sprinted, following the gravel path to Milrard. Eventually in the dark, windy night, I saw glowing, orange lights. The lights were coming from a small village located on a patch of farmland which I presumed to be Milrard. I walked around the village for a while, searching for the farmer to buy the carrots from. I found myself in front of a tall wooden building, with a stone foundation at the bottom, and a windmill near the top. I entered the building, tired from staying awake so late. There was a man behind the counter. His eyes were closed as he sat sleeping and he was snoring loudly. He wore a ripped red plaid shirt, and patched blue jeans. A round, straw hat, that created a shadow on his face, was perched on his head. "Hello, I have come here to buy some wild carrots." There was no answer. "Wake up!" I shouted. The farmer's eyes burst open in an instant. He was very startled, as he was woken from his deep sleep.

"Why are you here at this hour?" the farmer yelled in a loud, grumpy voice. "Sorry, King Darkus sent me here to retrieve some wild carrots. Do you possibly have any I could buy from you?" I asked. "Why did the King choose you to come out at night? It's very dangerous." The farmer seemed a good sort and perhaps he could help me find out who I truly was. I entrusted him with my story. "I woke up in a cave, with my memories forgotten. I found a sword and armour beside me and this small gold key that fell out of my pocket. I found myself in the kingdom of Duran and was told by King Darkus that I was a new army recruit. If I succeed at this task I will be in his grand army."

"A key?" May I see it?" asked the farmer. His face went pale as if he had seen a ghost. "This is a very special key, the key to peace, the key that will extinguish the evil that has taken over the Kingdom of Duran!" he exclaimed. With sorrow in his eyes the farmer proceeded to tell me the story of Duran. "When the Prince was a small boy of 8 years, he was told never to open the King's treasure chest for evil resided inside. The Prince, being a young boy, was curious and one day he stole the key from the King. At night when everyone was asleep he opened the chest. Suddenly, the evil wizard Darkus escaped from what had been his prison for centuries. The boy was afraid and ran far from the castle and hid in a cave. Darkus, using his magic, imprisoned the King and his family in the treasure chest and the wizard seized the kingdom for himself. It was said that a fairy seeing the boy crying in the cave and knowing what he had done, took pity and put him into a deep sleep. Legend has it that he would awaken and with the magical key he would restore peace and happiness to the land. It has been 10 years since that day. If the legends are true, this is the key and you are the Prince of Duran awakened from your sleep. Go to the castle now and save our kingdom!" I thanked the farmer and headed back on the path to the kingdom now knowing who I was. A great guilt consumed me knowing I had been the one who unlocked the chest setting free the evil wizard, Darkus. I also felt a great responsibility to return him to his prison and save the Kingdom.

Suddenly, I heard a thunderous explosion and a bright, glowing, orange flame emerged from the ground. It disappeared in a flash, leaving behind a menacing skeletal figure. The figure was dressed in black and silver armour, holding a sword with a flaming golden blade in its hand. The figure's body was made of white bones, and its eyes were lit by flames. I dropped the bag of wild carrots and pulled out my sword. It seemed like no match against the skeletal figure's sword. I tried aiming for the skeleton's face, but did no damage. The skeleton brought its sword up in front its face, lining it up centered. Its sword burst with even more burning, frightening flames. Clouds of smoke were floating up to the dark night sky. The burning blade, shining in the darkness, made its way towards me. I closed my eyes in fear of losing my life. Miraculously, the skeleton was pulled back into the flames that had summoned it. Cautiously, I continued on my journey to the castle planning what I would do when I stood in front of Darkus again.

I arrived back in the King's throne room. I could see the treasure chest covered in gems. How could I get close enough to place the key in the lock and open the chest? "I see you have brought my wild carrots. You have succeeded in your first quest, and you successfully passed my test of bravery when you fought the skeleton. You have earned a place in my grand army. Pass me the bag of carrots," he bellowed. When the King wasn't looking, I unlaced the bag. I dropped the carrots to the floor ensuring some had fallen near the chest. "Forgive me my King, for I am tired from the long journey and I have accidentally dropped your carrots. Let me gather them for you." I had the small gold key in my hand and as I came nearer to the chest I could feel my heartbeat explode inside me. I had only one chance to do this. As I picked the carrots off the floor, I found myself in front of the chest. Without stopping to think what might happen, I placed the key in the lock and turned it. Darkus howled and screamed in pain and anger. I opened the chest. Darkus exploded in a puff of smoke and he floated back into the treasure chest. I quickly closed the lid, confining the evil wizard to his prison again.

I stood silently trying to catch my breath, thinking about what had just happened. I saved the Kingdom of Duran. The clouds lifted from the sky and there were cheers from the villagers. Was it over? Perhaps I was dreaming, still in my endless sleep, for it did not seem real. My forgotten memories filled my head and I remembered all that had happened in the past. A great sadness and guilt overcame me for what I had done and the grief I had caused. I mourned for my family who I would never see again and the years that we had lost together. "My son," I heard a voice that was so familiar to me. I turned slowly and saw my parents and my brother. When Darkus returned to the chest, my family was freed from their prison. "I'm so sorry" I cried, tears filling my eyes. "It's over, my son, it's over," my father said smiling and embracing me.

There was one more thing I had to do if this was truly to be over. I went to the shore of the ocean and threw the key into the crashing waves. Darkus was now imprisoned for all eternity and never again would the Kingdom of Duran see the evil wizard.