

Once upon a time, in the kingdom of Whimsy, there lived a knight, the noble and worthy Sir Barrelot. He was as brave as he was reckless. In every battle, he was the first to charge on his faithful donkey, courageously facing any foe threatening King Shortstout the Potato-Eater's throne.

Sir Barrelot was not just a knight but a renowned monster hunter. His illustrious career was adorned with numerous triumphant monster eliminations. He had triumphed over the Dragon Sniffles, submerging it in a lake of potent antibiotics; the Cyclops Sourmilk, bombarding it with a cannon that launched large spherical candies; the Count Moldskin, whom he overcame with catapults loaded with pungent mothballs; and a host of other equally formidable adversaries.

But alas, even the bravest and most potent in this world sometimes meet their match. And this match was no monster but the charming princess and the king's daughter, Egglina, for whom Sir Barrelot harbored an unwavering affection. He did everything, braving countless dangers and facing formidable enemies, to win her favor, but she wanted nothing to do with him.

He would don his polka-dot swimsuit and plunge into treacherous seas to bring to light treasures and exquisite pearls, all in a bid to win her favor. Yet, she would accept these offerings with a nonchalant yawn, leaving him desolate, realizing that even this grand gesture had failed to capture her attention.

Among the gifts he had offered her were the rare dream rose, which he obtained by confronting the fairy Disastrella, the magical gown of the Baroness of Icecreamland, which resembled the starry canopy, the ever-filled chalice of orangeade, and many, many more, but the heartless princess remained unmoved. Driven to the brink of despair, he sought the wisdom of the esteemed healer, Striglina. To reach her, he braved scorching deserts, battling colossal scorpions, waded through swamps teeming with airborne crocodiles, and scaled mountains haunted by fearsome meatball-eating bandits armed with gigantic forks. He even confronted towering giants with their clubbed weapons and myriad bumps on their thick skulls, souvenirs from legendary brawls. But, undeterred, he pressed on, finally reaching his destination, stepping into her cavern, and declaring with unwavering resolve:

"Sage old woman, I love Princess Egglina, but she won't even look at me. What can I do to touch her unfeeling heart? Can you make me a love potion to make her fall for me?"

"Brave knight, I'd truly like to help you, but, unfortunately, it's not simple. When Egglina was born, her father, King Shortstout, had his royal magician freeze her heart so she wouldn't love any commoner and pass the kingdom into unworthy hands. If it doesn't thaw, there's nothing I can do."

"And what must be done, wise sorceress, for her heart to thaw so that she can finally love me?" asked Sir Barrelot in despair.

"Oh," said the wise Striglina, "you'll need to make a special dish, the famous dragon soup, which the forty cooks made for the emperor of the giants when he had a cold. You'll need the egg of a red dragon, pepper from the fiery desert, ashes of a Phoenix, lava from

the volcano of the iron dwarfs, fifteen cloves of garlic, tequila, fire mushrooms, and a bit of basil for flavor. She must eat it piping hot for her frozen heart to thaw. But beware because once she eats it and her heart thaws, you must ensure you are the first she sees. If she accidentally sees someone else, she will fall in love with that person instead of you."

"Oh, wise old woman, thank you, and if you need anything, don't hesitate."

"I do need something now, brave and noble knight."

"Speak! My life, my sword, my swift-footed donkey, at your service."

"You honor me with your readiness, brave knight, but I don't need your life, nor your sharp and fearsome sword, nor your strong purebred donkey, only your loaded purse. As you leave, you will see a large vase with coins. Unfortunately, they are few and of little value."

"Did I understand correctly, wise one? You prefer the humble reward of gold over having my brave hand, which has toppled giant beasts, saved kingdoms, and freed cities at your service?" "You understood well, most excellent nobleman." The knight sighed, offended, but did what had been asked of him. Relieved of the unnecessary weight of the coins planned to burden him throughout the adventure, he set out on his great quest, determined to succeed or... not succeed.