

THE QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN GATE



A DEVOTIONAL & STUDY GUIDE
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CHAPTER ONE - AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP

The greatest need of a person is to love and be loved. Reece, an orphan living alone in the woods, was used to fending for himself and accomplishing many things that few dared to do. But when Garreth offered him a home and friendship, Reece knew this was what he truly longed for.

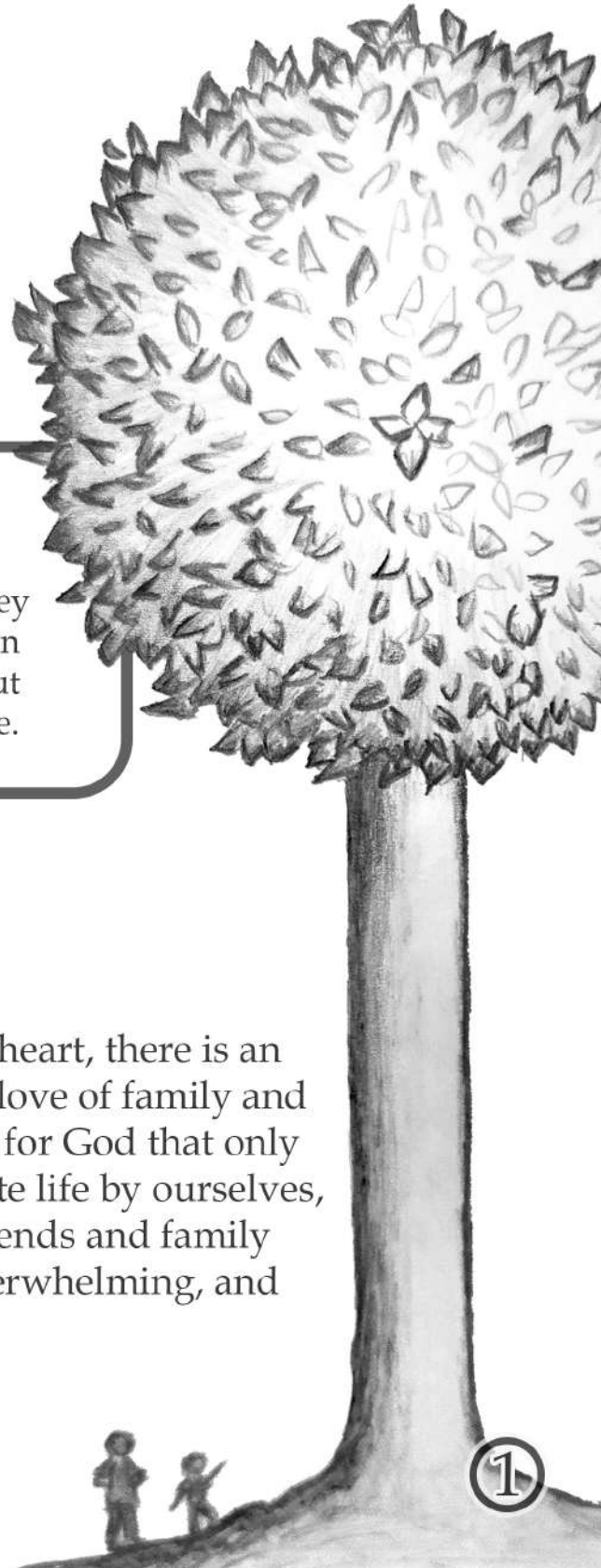


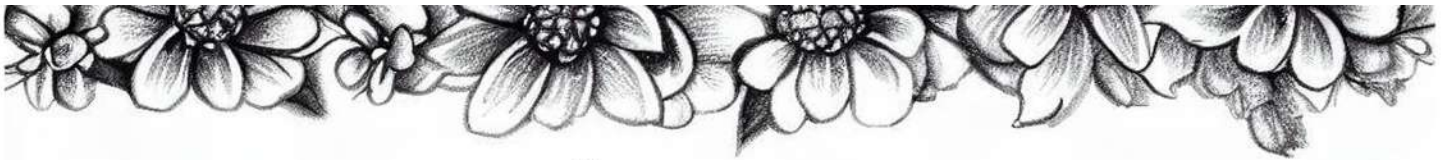
ECCLĒSIASTES 4:9-12
(New Living Translation)

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

WHAT DO THE VERSES MEAN?

God never meant for us to be alone. In our heart, there is an invisible hole that can only be filled by the love of family and friends. In addition, there is a built-in need for God that only He can satisfy. When we attempt to navigate life by ourselves, it is a lonely journey. But when we have friends and family who love us, the difficult times feel less overwhelming, and the joyous times are multiplied.





CHAPTER TWO - A NEW BEGINNING

Reece was a very observant boy. He noticed that plants and animals followed their instincts, which are like invisible instructions guiding all living things in what to do. Observing nature made him wonder if an intelligent Maker had planned and created everything.



JOB 12:7-10

(Contemporary English Version)

If you want to learn, then go and ask the wild animals and the birds, the flowers and the fish.
Any of them can tell you
what the Lord has done.
Every living creature is in the hands of God.



WHAT DO THESE VERSES MEAN?

Living things in nature cannot speak the human language. But if you look at the plants and flowers, you can see wonderful patterns that point to a Creator. If you put a snowflake under a microscope, you can see each one has a unique pattern. If you look at your own fingerprint, you will know that He did the same thing with you. There is not another one like you in the world. God didn't make things randomly. He created each one with much thought and care. When we study everything He has made, we can see that it all points to a loving Creator.



CHAPTER THREE - THE WORLD BEYOND THE DOOR

When the Quest began, Reece tried to learn as much as he could from the other explorers. But he realized most of them were basing their decisions on hearsay. No one truly knew how to finish the Quest. It was a good thing he did not act rashly.



PROVERBS 4:7
(New Living Translation)

Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment.

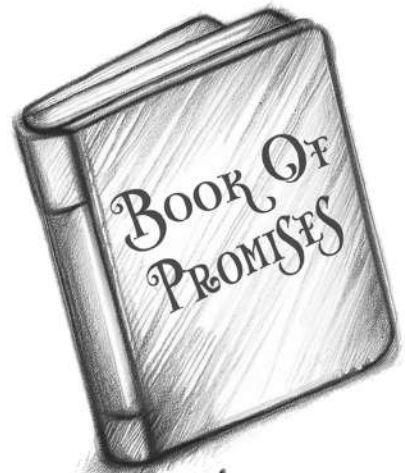


WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

Sometimes the most unexpected gifts come through words of wisdom. Proverbs is one of the books in the Bible that is full of wise instructions. They were written to help us avoid unnecessary hurts and regrets. In addition to reading the Bible, we can also learn from mentors who can guide us.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE GIFTS

One of the gifts that Reece received was a book filled with the Quest Maker's promises. He didn't realize it yet, but the ordinary-looking book was filled with words that were true, full of life, and powerful. It represents The Holy Bible.



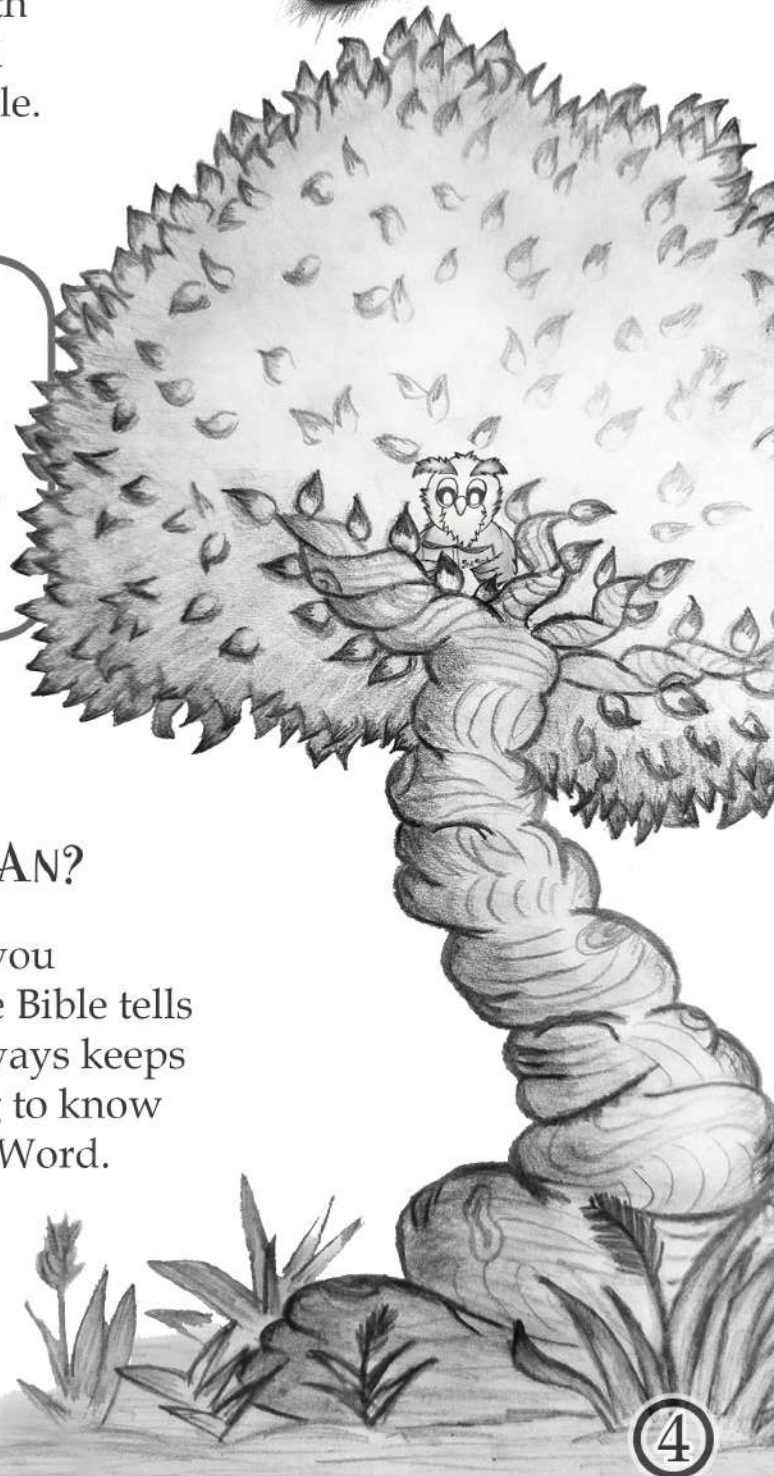
2 TIMOTHY 2:13

(Contemporary English Version)

"If we are not faithful, he will still be faithful. Christ cannot deny who he is."

WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

Have you ever made a promise that you couldn't keep? All of us have. But the Bible tells us that God is not like people. He always keeps His promises. That is very reassuring to know because it means we can trust in His Word.



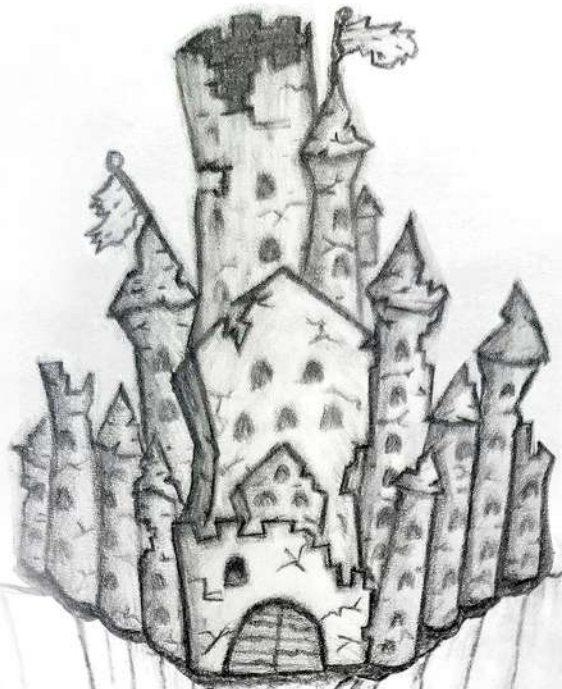
CHAPTER FIVE - THE ROAD OF ENDURANCE

This road was designed to train explorers on the Quest and make them stronger. In life, we have a lot of things we wish we could finish instantly or make them disappear altogether like chores and homework. But many times, we need to endure them and persevere. By doing so, we actually grow stronger. That's why, as Reece persevered on the Road of Endurance, he didn't feel so weak anymore.

MATTHEW 11:28-30
(New Living Translation)

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

In the story, the passage was shortened to: "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Learn from me, because I am humble and gentle, and the burden I give you is light."



WHAT DO THESE VERSES MEAN?

A burden is something that is often hard to carry, like a heavy bag. But it can also mean something invisible like fears or worries that make us feel gloomy, anxious, or discouraged. It can be feelings, too, like hate, hurt, anger, and bad memories that take away our joy.

We carry these invisible burdens in our hearts, and they drag us down and cause us to be tired. As children of God, we become connected to Jesus. By reading His Word, Jesus can teach us how to let go of our invisible burdens and finally find rest.



CHAPTER SIX - THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

Fiama glowed with the Light of Truth that revealed which things were genuinely valuable. That's because truth is like a powerful set of eyeglasses. When we look at situations through those lenses, even though nothing has changed, they can alter how we view things. Including ourselves!

JOHN 18:37

(Contemporary English Version)

Jesus said, "I was born into this world to tell about the truth. And everyone who belongs to the truth knows my voice."

WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

Jesus knew that, in this world, there are many kinds of things that can bring darkness into our lives. For example, many people believe that money is a source of happiness so they spend their whole lives chasing after it. They find out too late that, while money is necessary, it does not give lasting joy.

That is why Jesus came here. He is the Light who can show us what is truly important and eternal.



CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CASTLE OF SHADOWS

At this point in the Quest, Reece needed to enter the gloomy, dusty castle. He was terrified of facing the giant he knew was waiting for him, but eventually, he discovered there was no giant at all.

It was a dwarf all along! The young explorer learned that not everything is what it seems, and he could find his courage when he began trusting in the promises of the Quest Maker.

PSALM 23:4

(Living Bible Translation)

Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.

In the story, “dark valley” was changed to “shadow,” and pronouns were also altered. This is what Reece read: Even when walking through the shadow of death you need not be afraid, for I am close beside you, guarding, guiding all the way.



WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

There are many things that scare us. But Jesus promises, even though we cannot physically see Him, He is always with us. When we focus on our fears, everything looks terribly scary. But when we focus on Jesus, we find comfort in the fact that He is bigger and more powerful than anything.

CHAPTER EIGHT - THE FORT OF DESIRES

Just like the strange, funny man who kept inviting Reece to enter the fort, there will always be people who will urge us to do things or go places that seem fun and cool. But in truth, they're pointing us to something that will only hurt us in the long run. That's why it's always best to be prayerful and not let impulsiveness guide our decisions.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23
(Contemporary English Version)

Some of you say, "We can do whatever we want to!" But I tell you not everything may be good or helpful.

WHAT DOES THIS VERSE MEAN?

God gave everyone free will which means we all have freedom to choose. But it doesn't mean everything we pick is good for us. That's why the Bible constantly reminds us to be selective, develop good judgment, and seek guidance from those who are wiser and more experienced so that we avoid the pain of bad decisions.

CHAPTER NINE - THE FORT OF EMPTINESS

Many people who get robbed don't think it will ever happen to them until it does. When we let our guard down, that's when things might actually go wrong! After completing many difficult tasks, Reece began to think he was invincible.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:12-13
(New Living Translation)



If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

In the story, some pronouns were changed. This was what Reece read:
If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And I am faithful. I will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, I will show you a way out so that you can endure.



WHAT DO THESE VERSES MEAN?

Temptations are everywhere. That is why we must be prayerful, alert, and wise. It's important to be accountable to someone as well. It can be a family member, a friend, or a mentor. When I was still in college, I belonged to a group of friends who valued honesty. We studied together and helped the others who lagged behind. But during exams, we never shared answers with each other.

So it was a sweet achievement for all of us when we graduated with the highest grades among hundreds of students.



CHAPTER TEN - THE WAY OUT

This was a crucial time for Reece. Even though the situation seemed hopeless, he was finding courage through the promises of the Quest Maker. When he first began the Quest, he found it awkward talking to someone he couldn't see. But after some time, Reece had the joyful confidence that his prayers were heard.

PSALM 86:5

(New Living Translation)

O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help



In the story, the verse was shortened and pronouns were changed to: "He is full of unfailing love for all who ask for his help."



WHAT DOES THIS VERSE MEAN?

God is just waiting for us to ask for His help, and He will be there with love and forgiveness. When I was still in High School, I was so tempted to copy the answers from my seatmate who didn't realize her test paper was within my view. Desperate, I prayed to God for help. To my surprise, I felt a surge of confidence not to cheat, even if it meant facing the possibility of failing. When I found the courage to be honest, I felt unexpected joy. Today, I don't remember how I scored on that test, but I still recall the life-lesson I had gained: that the sweetest satisfaction in life is not to have the highest grade but to please the heart of God.

CHAPTER ELEVEN - THE SONGS OF CREATION

Reece was at first dazzled by the magical rooms in the Fort of Desires. After he escaped that place of temptations, he met the Tree of Life and the glowing aurorians who helped him understand more about the Quest Maker. By this time, even though there were many things that still baffled him, Reece was realizing that getting to know the Quest Maker was even more beautiful and satisfying than anything else in the world.

PSALM 139:8, 9, 10 AND 12
(New International Version)

"If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast...even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you."





In the story, the pronouns in the verses were changed. This was what the aurorians sang: If you go up to the heavens, he is there; If you make your bed in the depths, he is there. If you rise on the wings of the dawn, if you settle on the far side of the sea, even there his hand will guide you, his right hand will hold you fast. The darkness will not be dark to him; the night will shine like the day for darkness is as light to him.

WHAT DO THESE VERSES MEAN?

No matter where we are, God's love is so great that He is always with us. Whether we are swimming in the ocean, in the middle of a storm, or up in the tallest building, God is so big that He is everywhere. Yet even though the world is vast, He pays attention to every little thing about us. For example, when one strand of hair falls from our head, God notices. He loves us so much that He sees even the tiniest details of our lives.



CHAPTER TWELVE - THE LAND OF DESOLATION

The Land of Desolation was dark and dreary. Yet despite this, Reece was full of joy as he crossed it. He did not focus on the bleakness around him because he was learning that hope can be found in knowing the Quest Maker.

REVELATION 1:7-18
(New Living Translation)

“Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look – I am alive forever and ever!”



In the story, the verse was shortened to:
“Don’t be afraid! I am the Living One. I died, but look – I am alive forever and ever!”

WHAT DO THESE VERSES MEAN?

There are times when we all feel like we are in a land of desolation. Maybe when we feel like we don’t belong, we have no friends, or we’ve simply failed at something. Whatever the situation is, the secret to overcoming this sadness is to start counting our blessings. No matter how awful the day is, there is always something we can be thankful for. What’s more, we can choose to be grateful in this most amazing fact: Jesus loves us so much that He willingly laid down His life for us. There is no greater love than this!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN- THE CRYSTAL WOLVES

Fiama's name is of Italian origin. It actually means “flame.” She is a fire bird who was sent by the Quest Maker to help Reece on his journey. It was a good thing Reece met her before the crystal wolves because he might have easily fallen for their lies!



JOHN 14:26

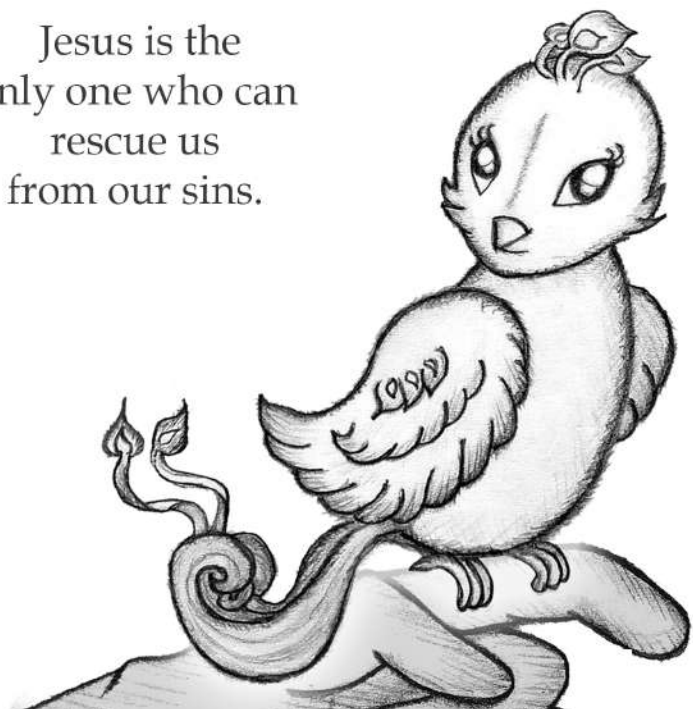
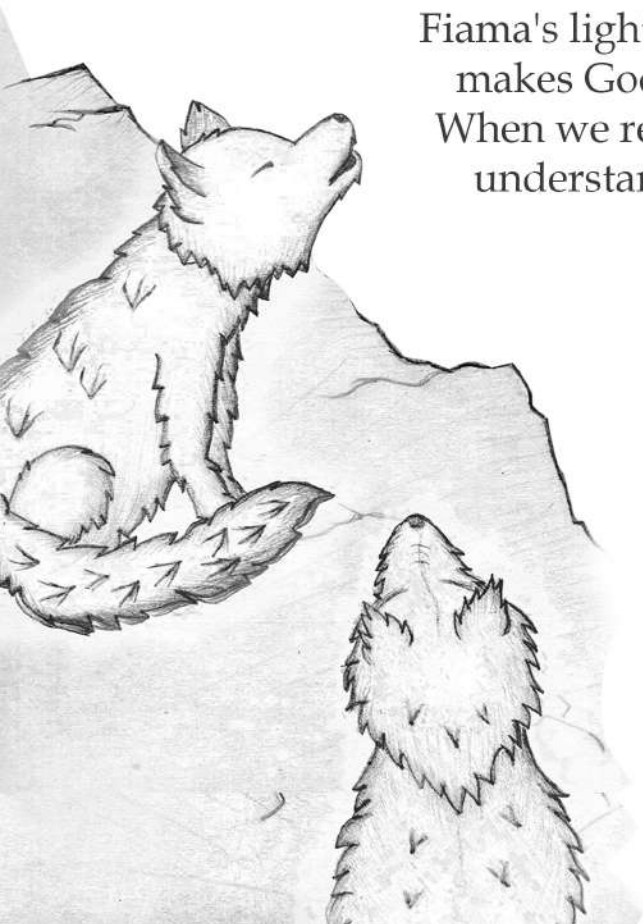
(Contemporary English Version)

Jesus told his disciples, “But the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you.”

WHAT DOES THIS VERSE MEAN?

The Holy Spirit came to comfort us, convict us, and connect us to God. To convict means to show us the truth about sin – the same way Fiama's light did. Sin is the bad stuff we do that makes God sad and separates us from Him. When we realize its effect in our lives, we will understand why we need a loving Savior.

Jesus is the
only one who can
rescue us
from our sins.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN- THE GOLDEN STAIRWAY

In this chapter, Reece runs up the stairway that leads to the Golden Gate. This represents the fact that there is only one way to be saved from our sins.

JOHN 10:9

(New International Version)

Jesus says, "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved."

EPHESIANS 3:17

(New Living Translation)

"Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong."



WHAT DO THESE VERSES MEAN?

The Quest Maker in the story is Jesus Christ. The two verses above tell us that He is the only way for us to be saved. Many people often think that doing good deeds is enough to go to Heaven. But that is not true. If they were enough, then Jesus wouldn't have needed to come to earth to die. But because He knew it was the only way, He chose to die on the cross and pay our penalty for sin. His love was so great that He made that sacrifice for us. Then, He rose again on the third day, defeating death once and for all.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN- THE GOLDEN GATE



Reece, even though he was still a young boy, learned to observe and listen well. He began to understand that many things that felt good did not give the long-term satisfaction that he expected. This made him more determined to reach the Golden Gate, while others had given up on it, because he knew finishing the Quest mattered more than anything.

MATTHEW 7:14

(New International Reader's Version)

But the gate is small and the road is narrow that leads to life. Only a few people find it.



WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

The Bible says that not many people find the way to Heaven. That's because most are easily distracted by the pursuit of wealth, fame, or other things that feel good but are only temporary. It is much wiser to focus on things that are eternal.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN- THE QUEST MAKER'S GIFT

Reece had finally reached the Golden Gate and entered an amazing world that surpassed his wildest dreams. But the most phenomenal thing that happened to him was when the Quest Maker asked Reece to become his child.

JOHN 1:12
(Living Bible Translation)

But to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. All they needed to do was to trust him to save them.

WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

The Bible tells us that our hearts can be God's home. Just like Reece, when we ask Him to live in our hearts, we become children of God. We become saved. What's even more amazing is that we don't need to be in Heaven to get to know Jesus. By reading the Bible, applying the things we've learned from it, and praying to God, we can get to know Him even while we're still on earth.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN - BACK TO EIDDEN

Garreth had joined the Quest when he was seven years old. Like many of the other explorers, he failed to reach the finish line. Now that he was an old man, he thought he was no longer fit to try again. But after listening to Reece's amazing experience, Garreth began to have a spark of hope that perhaps he could still embark on that life-changing journey.

ROMANS 10:14

(Contemporary English Version)

How can people have faith in the Lord and ask him to save them, if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear, unless someone tells them?

WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

What I love about Reece is that he never forgot Garreth. He knew his friend still did not know the Quest Maker and asked to return so that he could tell the old man about him. How about you? Do you know anyone in your life who doesn't know God? If the answer is yes, God might be nudging you to share with them about His love and His gift of salvation.