

Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

Prologue

The preparation was complete, so I waited. The muscles in my arms still burned from having worked so hard, but now I was finished. The machinery was bolted and secured. The tower was steady and unmoving under the weight of twisted steel and plastic. Looking at it now, it appeared exactly as it was—something out of a dream.

News of the machine had spread to the villages, and people were starting to arrive. The traders spotted it from their stalls and packed up their things. The truckers left their vehicles along the roads. Everyone walked into the valley, and now gathered in its shadow. I recognized these faces. Some of these people had mocked me for months, and still they whispered, even laughed. More of them were coming. It was time.

Balancing the small reed and wires in my left hand, I used the other to pull myself onto the tower's first rung. The soft wood groaned under my weight, and the compound fell silent. I continued to climb, slowly and assuredly, until I was facing the machine's crude frame. Its plastic arms were burned and blackened, its metal bones bolted and welded into place. I paused and studied the flecks of rust and paint, how they appeared against the fields and mountains beyond. Each piece told its own tale of discovery, of being lost and found in a time of hardship and fear. Finally together now, we were all being reborn.

Two wires dangled from the heart of the machine and gently danced in the breeze. I knotted their frayed ends together with the wires that sprouted off the reed, just as I'd always pictured. Down below, the crowd cackled like a gang of birds.

"Quiet down," someone said. "Let's see how crazy this boy really is."

A sudden gust muffled the voices below, then picked up into a steady wind. It took hold of my T-shirt and whistled through the tower rungs. Reaching over, I removed a bent piece of wire that locked the machine's spinning wheel in place. Once released, the wheel and arms began to turn. They spun slowly at first, then faster and faster, until the force of their motion rocked the tower. My knees buckled, but I held on.

Don't let me down.

I gripped the reed and wires and waited for the miracle. Finally it came, at first a tiny light that flickered from my palm, then a surging magnificent glow. The crowd gasped and shuddered. The children pushed for a better look.

"It's true!" someone said.

"Yes," said another. "The boy has done it."