

The Legacy

Alois woke up to the bright light filtering through his window. He frowned and looked at his clock. It was only two; it shouldn't be this bright. He stood up shakily from his bed and shuffled to his window. The sight before him confused him.

Only a couple blocks away, where there used to be an empty field, a fair had been set up. It was the bright light that the Ferris wheel was emitting that had woken Alois up. Alois frowned as he tried to remember. Had there been any pamphlets around town of a fair coming? He couldn't remember any.

He stared at it in confusion for a dozen minutes before turning away from the window. He got dressed and silently crept through his apartment, careful not to wake his mother up. He winced as the door made a squeaking sound but it seemed as if his mother was still sleeping. He locked the door behind him.

Alois walked through the silent streets, towards the beckoning lights of the fair. Against his better judgement, he decided to go investigate. After all, what wasn't shady about an unannounced fair?

The fair was much bigger up close than it had originally appeared. Alois circled around the fence surrounding the fair. The only visible entrance was the gate that had been locked shut however that didn't bother Alois who was a good climber. He pulled himself up above the fence with barely any effort. The fence was only a couple meters high so Alois jumped down.

As he jumped, the bottom of his jeans got caught on the fence. Once he had landed, he looked down at his jeans and saw there was a tear at the bottom. He swore in German. Alois, being an

impulsive teenager as most teenagers are, never stopped to consider that this was breaking and entering.

All the rides in the fair were on, as well as the games in the tent. Music blared and lights flashed, giving an eerie feeling to the empty fair. Alois thought it strange that there was absolutely no one here, not even staff. Still, he explored the fair.

Alois heard footsteps. He ran towards one of the games, jumped over the counter and hid behind it.

"I know you're there, boy," a voice said, right in front of the counter. Alois lifted his head.

"I'm sorry... It's just that I hadn't heard any notice about a fair so I was surprised when it woke me up," Alois tried to explain. Then he frowned and looked at the old man in front of him.

"Mr. Jensen?" he asked, his eyebrow shooting up in confusion. Mr. Jensen lived in the same apartment building as Alois.

"How are you here, boy?" the old man asked, also frowning at Alois.

"I jumped over the fence," Alois answered, deciding that Mr. Jensen was harmless enough.

Mr. Jensen kept giving Alois a strange look. Finally, he said, "Walk with me, boy."

Alois jumped over the counter and followed the man.

Mr. Jensen asked Alois if he knew what this place was to which the boy shook his head. The man asked him if he found it strange that there was no one here apart from him. Alois answered that yes, he found it very strange.

Mr. Jensen walked him to the Ferris wheel and offered him a ride. For some reason, Alois felt compelled to agree. Mr. Jensen sat down next to Alois and the Ferris wheel took off. Alois wondered how it could do so with nobody controlling it.

“Did you know I proposed to my wife on this very Ferris wheel back in the 70s?” Mr. Jensen asked him. Being a rhetorical question, Alois didn’t answer.

“It was shut down in the 90s, before you were born,” Mr. Jensen continued, “They demolished it and that was it, end of story... No more fair.”

“Why is it here now then?” Alois asked.

Mr. Jensen smiled slightly as if he thought that Alois’ question was funny. “They call this the Phantom Fair now... I take care of it,” he said.

“But if it got demolished...” Alois began.

“When an object is loved and well-cared for, it develops a spirit of its own and even if its physical body no longer exists, its soul is still there,” Mr. Jensen explained, “That’s what happens with phantom ships.”

“So... What you’re saying is that this fair is basically a ghost?” Alois asked, doubt in his voice. Mr. Jensen nodded.

“The Phantom Fair is very picky... In fact, you’re the second person she has ever shown herself to,” Mr. Jensen said. Alois frowned slightly. “I’m getting old, boy,” Mr. Jensen sighed, “I can’t take care of her like I used to.”

“Wait, you want me to take care of an imaginary fair?” Alois asked sassily.

“She’ll go to ruins if you don’t,” was the only answer that Alois got.

“Ok, then, what happens if I do agree to be her ‘caretaker’?”

“I can rest easy.”

Suddenly, Mr. Jensen didn’t seem like the man who had shown magic card tricks to Alois when he was younger and got him his first whoopee cushion. Now, he seemed like the old, dying man he actually was. This made Alois take pity for him.

“I’ll... I’ll do it,” Alois said, first hesitating and then more confident. Mr. Jensen gave him a grateful smile. He reached out his fingers and poked Alois on the forehead.

Alois woke up in his bed. His clock said eight o’clock. He stretched and got out of bed. *That was a weird dream*, he told himself. He looked out the window just to be sure and as expected, there was no fair in the empty lot.

Alois slipped on his jeans and headed into the kitchen for breakfast. His mother was already in the kitchen.

“You already ripped your jeans? But they were new!” she complained. Alois looked down at his jeans and saw a tear at the bottom. He frowned as a sense of familiarity washed over him. “Whatever,” she sighed, “Can you go get the mail?”

Alois grabbed the keys and left. He went downstairs where the mailboxes were. There was nothing interesting in the mail but that was to be expected.

As he walked back to his apartment, he passed Mr. Jensen who was back from his morning walk.

As Alois passed him, he thought he saw Mr. Jensen wink.