

Old Roy threw another log into the fire. He sat down on the fallen tree he used as a bench and glanced at the night sky. Thoughts of peace crossed his mind as he examined the stars. A distant owl hooted deep inside the forest. The sun had already set when Roy got out of the woods and built his little camp. He looked at the horizon. If he wasn't that old he could have been at his nephew's by dawn.

He didn't have much to walk left; further, the path was pretty easy. The only thing beyond was a small group of trees that protected the patch of wood Roy was in from the winds of the fields.

Old Roy got back to the present. The can of beans he had been preparing was ready. From a pocket he took a small spoon. He lifted it up. The flames behind gave it a weird look. Roy made it spin between his fingers and then dug it inside his dinner. He took a bite. The beans were rather bitter, but they didn't last much in the can. Now, the old man was just looking at the fire. Someone sitting next to him would have easily spotted the sadness in his eyes. Memories of childhood, loves, and friendships danced in his rusty mind.

The spoon was still in his hand. Old Roy looked at it again. He smiled. He had carved it from a branch twenty minutes before attending a job interview to be the king's food taster -and bringing your own cutlery was a requirement. Spotting the poisoned dishes of a buffet was the only test. Experience had given Roy an immune system of steel and the gift of detecting any toxine. He could detect one simple drop of bleach in twenty litres of water. The king found this ability particularly useful.

Monarchy is risky business. In fact, there's an old saying that says 'the more powerful the king, the broader the back.' With Old Roy's help, -at that time simply Roy,- the king found at least ten traitors during his reign.

Old Roy and his loved ones never missed a thing during those times. Ever since he made that spoon. He was still looking at it, now with both gratitude and hate. He had earned a lot of just by tasting dishes with that little spoon. Only with that spoon. He had also made lots of enemies; powerful ones, far more than him. People who desperately wanted the throne and whose plots had failed because of Old Roy's senses; and now, there they were. Pointing at him with bows and bayonets. Old Roy had known since he left that they would follow him. He had convinced them not to shoot him until he had had one last meal. Finally, he rolled the spoon between his hands and threw it in the fire. After a deep breath, he let them have their sweet, cold, poisoned revenge.