

The Oasis

In the desert there was an oasis. And because this was the only place for many miles where water could be found, a town grew up around it. And the people of the town built a wall to guard their resources.

One night a band of marauders came and attacked the town, trying to breach the walls and take control of water. The men of the town went out to defend the town. They fought through the night and by morning all the townsmen had been killed. But the attackers had also suffered heavy losses and when the sun rose they retreated to regroup.

The women of the town were greatly grieved. They wailed and tore their clothes. But when night fell the marauders returned and once again assailed the walls of the town. The women did not want to let the town fall into the hands of the brigands so despite their grief they took the weapons from the hands of their dead husbands and sons and went to the walls to defend the town. They too fought all through the night and by morning they were all killed. But again the attackers retreated to tend to their dead and wounded.

The only ones left in the town were the children and they were desperately frightened. They cowered in their homes and waited for the marauders to return. Night fell and the wicked band again arrived outside the walls. But this time they found the gates open, so they went inside. No one fought to defend the town. In the center of town they found a table set with plates and goblets all filled with food and drink. The children waited for them and one of them stood forth and said to the men, "We are orphans. We have no fathers or mothers for they have been slain. Now we are yours. You are our fathers and we will serve you." And the children stepped forth and embraced the men.

The men were moved to pity to see these children and were filled with remorse for what they had done. They took the children to be their children and loved them as their own. They opened the gates of the town and welcomed all who came, giving freely of the water that flowed there. There they prospered until the end of their days.