

So meek and so mild

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by [Estirose](#)

Summary

Kyung-ok watches Ju-u grow up into a warrior.

Kyung-ok looked up as little Ji-u rushed up to her, holding something in her hands. Ji-u bowed and handed it to Kyung-ok, who nearly dropped it. Had little Ji-u found the medallion piece, the one that everybody in their village had looked for over the years?

From Ji-u's rapid explanations, it appeared that she had. It fit the legend, that a girl would find the medallion half and would be destined to rescue the princess and defeat evil. Kyung-ok had once been a little girl and had, loving legends, looked for the piece to no avail. It hadn't prevented her from training, because Kyung-ok was not somebody who stopped when she found that she wasn't destined; she figured that maybe someday a girl would find it, and that girl would need training. And she could always teach another generation what she'd learned, just to pass down the skills and keep them from getting lost when the chosen warrior came.

"What do I do?" the girl asked, and Kyung-ok told her. She drew out the maps and showed Ji-u where she would have to go someday, to that mystical pyramid off the coast, so far away that it would take a week's journey just to get there.

"Let me teach you," Kyung-ok said, because she could not refuse Ji-u's request. Not with the kingdom at stake. Not with Ji-u's life at stake either. So she taught the little girl the basics of concentration, of stances, the same way she had learned from her mentor years before. "There is so much to learn."

"Thank you," Ji-u said. She was always a polite child, but with a knack of being where she wasn't supposed to be. Something that caused her mother some distress, but Kyung-ok was sure meant the kingdom's salvation. "I will learn."

So Kyung-ok taught her as best that she could. She had taught those of Ji-u's mother's generation who wanted to know, but that had been years before; matters of the village had become more important than teaching those particular techniques. However, it was Kyung-ok she had turned to, and Kyung-ok who felt the responsibility to do so.

And the other elders recognized it and let her concentrate on Ji-u's training. She doubted Ji-u realized how much the weight of the village and the world was laid on her young shoulders. How much was expected of her, how much her destiny had changed when she became the Champion, the White Warrior.

Kyung-ok watched little Ju-u struggle with her early training, but as the months went on, there was a certain confidence that started to show in her stances. She tended to be clumsy at first, like all of Kyung-ok's students had been. Kyung-ok watched her with pride, knowing that she was growing up to be the one that the kingdom needed.

Eventually, Ju-u moved in with her, because it was deemed that her training was more important than her staying at home with her family. Kyung-ok was not a stern matriarch. She had raised daughters and sons, and she had raised them with solemn joy. They had all done well, and some of her grandchildren were Ju-u's age, so the little girl had a second family around her to support her.

"Grandmother," she said one day, for by custom Kyung-ok had essentially adopted her, "Can I do this?"

"If you practice, and practice, and practice, then you will do well." She had no doubt that this is what Ju-u needed to hear. There were no false reassurances in her words, just the truth.

"Then I will. Thank you, Grandmother." Ju-u bowed at her and then went back to practicing, her moves fluid. Someday Kyung-ok would be able to teach her how to manipulate water. It was necessary, for the enemies were creatures of fire. Or so the legends went. Kyung-ok had never seen them, since they were so far away, but there were descriptions of terrible beings that looked vaguely human but were not. Some of it, she was sure, was folklore, but it was better to prepare Ju-u for anything that she could.

And Ju-u grew up. Her body developed, and she always stayed lean and limber. She became an adolescent, and Kyung-ok feared that she would become rebellious. There was a certainness of her gaze and her step that told Kyung-ok that she felt ready for anything, when in reality, she was only ready to fight.

Much to Kyung-ok's relief, though, Ju-u remained serious, dedicated to her training. If there was rebellion in her thoughts, she kept it to herself. Even when the boys started noticing her, she ignored them, as if her life did not contain enough room for romance. Which was a shame, but her destiny was what it was.

Not that Kyung-ok didn't encourage her "granddaughter" to have fun. There would be a life after saving the world, and if Ju-u managed to achieve her destiny, she would deserve to rest for a while. Even those with a destiny deserved some time to be themselves. And Ju-u was handling a destiny like no other.

One day, when she judged Ju-u ready, she called her to the stream. "To defend yourself, you must learn to manipulate water."

"Yes, grandmother." There was a slight bow, and then Ju-u watched her intently. She reached outwards, concentrating on pulling water out of air, letting it roll around in a ball. It was easy for her, since she'd been practicing for so long.

It wasn't so much for Ju-u, but that was normal. For all that she was destined, she wasn't perfect. It took her some time to get the techniques right. But she kept trying, and kept trying, because that was what she did. Kyung-ok watched her with a pleased smile on her face. Soon it would be time, and Ju-u would do well.

And Ju-u practiced, and practiced, and practiced. The village tailors worked together to make her an outfit for her journey, and presented it to her, which she took with a small smile on her face. It fit her well, Kyung-ok saw. Her adoptive granddaughter, the White Warrior, was ready for the world.

Watching her, knowing how well Ju-u had grown up, Kyung-ok could only smile.

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