

PROMPT #1: Write about a god desperately trying to get their chosen hero to follow the path they set out for them.

## T'is Only a Simple Life I Want

by **Devon Marchand**

“You are always where you are meant to be”

This was something Paul lived by every day of his life. When it was sunny he would be outside, when it rained he would be inside. There was always too much to do in this life. Plow the fields, weed the garden, shear the sheep, patch his trousers. He loved every second of it. While his siblings moved on to “bigger and better things” as they claimed, he had stayed where he grew up and as a young adult had the lifestyle down to an efficient art.

His days were uneventful yet busy. Almost all of them.

It was a clear, crisp fall day when a strange man with ragged clothes stumbled onto his pasture. The tavern was across town, so it couldn't have been a drunk. Besides, it didn't open until 7 pm. It wasn't even noon.

Paul was busy picking apples when the man staggered towards him. Might as well see what he wants. Maybe he is lost.

“Cuse me? Need somethin’?” he called out.

“Yes, I do need something. Is your name Paul?”

“...Yes sir, my name's Paul. Whatcha asking for?”

The man seemed to grin from ear to ear at this statement and cleared his throat. “Well can you get down from the tree for me please? I need to talk to you” he said with conviction.

“Sure thin” Paul said as he jumped out of the tree with an apple in his hand. “Want it?”  
“No thank you. We do not have time. Listen to me as we do not have much time. My name is

Merlin. I have been searching for the next hero of the grail for centuries. You share a bloodline with Sir Percival and God himself wants you to find the grail..."

Merlin went into a long, drawn out story about the history of the grail and why it was needed. Paul could have cared less and only wanted to get back to picking his yearly crop of apples. He had more valuable things to do than listen to a crackpot ramble about nonsense. "...And you must find the grail to prevent it from going into the wrong hands and save the world from evil! So when will you be ready to start your epic quest?"

"Pardon me, but you ain't makin' any sense. I don't want to go on any quest and I have more important things to be tendin' to than listenin' to a fairy story."

"A fairy story? A fairy story? My boy this is not a fairy story! It is real and God himself wants you to find the grail. It is your destiny."

"Well, thanks for the tale. I have to get back to pickin' my apples. The town is a bit down the trail there if you need a bed for the night. The inn always has a bed open for travelers. Take care." With this he went back to the ladder to continue his apple picking.

BANG

A large noise made Paul jump. Right in his basket of picked apples was a new one he didn't pick. Instead of the greens and reds he expected there was a sheen of yellow. No, not yellow, gold.

"What the devil is this?" Paul swore "You been playing tricks on me? This is no way to treat a stranger?"

"Oh that is no trick, Paul. It is proof that God is sending you a sign. Go ahead, touch the apple."

At this Paul reached down and instead of feeling the smooth outer skin of an apple felt something harder and heavier. At this he threw the apple hard into a nearby oak tree where it fell to the ground.

"What are you playin' at? Didn't anyone tell you not to play with demon spells?"

"These are no demon spells, my boy. That is only a sign from God."

"You can do whatever you please, but I ain't going! My purpose from God is to stay here and tend to my farm. I wouldn't trade it for all the demon gold or fancy jewels. I only want food in my belly and a roof above my head."

"But this is not your destiny!" Merlin raved "Your destiny is to fight beasts, save damsels, and gain riches beyond your wildest dreams! If not then you befall the wrath of God himself. The choice here is obvious."

“Then that is not the God I know. He wants me to raise animals and tend crops. Not this fairy story you keep spinnin’ and spinnin’. That’s not real.”

At this the dented, gold apple melted into a sunshine puddle on the ground and slowly drained until it was only a memory.

“Now if you are done with your ramblin’ I have actual work to be done. Be gone with ya.”

“But my boy...”

“I DON’T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT YOUR SILLY QUEST. IT IS ALMOST WINTER AND I HAVE TO PREPARE FOR IT OR ELSE I AND MY LIVE STOCK WILL DIE. I DON’T KNOW HOW YOU DID THE APPLE TRICK BUT IT IS NOT SOMETHING I WANT ANY PART OF. GET OFF MY PROPERTY AND NEVER RETURN. IF YOU WANT SOMEONE TO TAKE ON YOUR QUEST I SUGGEST MY BROTHER STEVEN WHO RUNS THE TAVERN. HE’LL LISTEN TO YOUR TALL TALES!”

At this Paul turned around, climbed up the tree and started picking apples.

“Your brother Steven? He will work. Well take care, my boy, and may you live with no regrets with your choice.” Merlin said.

He then turned around and stumbled back from once he came.

Good riddance.

“I hope my brother has no trouble with that fool” Paul thought to himself “he was a blatherin’ about child fancies.”

As he filled the remaining baskets full of apples, he soon forgot about the interaction with the blasphemous Merlin and planned out what he was going to have for dinner that night. Everything was back to the same, normal life he knew and loved. No adventure will ever call his name besides milking a cow or shearing a sheep. That is enough of a reward for him.