

I SPY

There was once a very special city, so special that hidden behind every window there was a surprising story. It was said for example that behind this window there lived a family that spoke using only the letter 'I': in the morning they said 'giid diy', instead of 'good day'. In this house there also lived a lady who had three hands and three feet. She was called Tri-tri. And on the other side of the city, behind this window there lived a wizard who erased bad things. On the outskirts some very strange trees grew, which looked like gigantic artichokes. It was said that if you ate their fruit you would stay young forever but your nose would grow.

But the most surprising thing of all was that, when the king was holding a parliament to prepare for his wars, the city was governed by his son James I, a boy of just seven, who unlike his father did not like wars at all and had a very special way of ruling: by playing

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Every morning the young king shouted out, "I spy with my little eye."

"What do you see?" all his vassals answered together, and the walls of the town seemed to resound.

"Something little," the king said.

"What letter does it begin with?" they always asked ceremoniously.

"With S," the king replied.

Someone who had just gone up the stairs to the top of the walls shouted out, "Staircase!"

And he was wrong, for it was not the staircase that the young king had thought of.

"Today you'll have to sweep the walls and leave them spick and span," James I said to him.

Someone else who just then was hoisting a flag said: "Standard!"

"No, you're wrong too."

And the man next to him added, "It could be a tree ... like a ... sycamore!"

"No, it's not that. Today both of you will have to pick all the fruit from the trees."

A knight called out, "A shield!"

"No, it's not that either. You will feed the animals all week," said the boy king, starting to lose patience.

Two lords who were sitting in a tent wondered, "What can the heir to the throne have thought of?"

"Of course! Heir. That's the word."

"Don't be silly, heir begins with H. If the king hears us we'll be sweeping the path for a whole week."

Someone who was half hidden said, "A scorpion."

"What! We're not in the desert. There can't be any scorpions here, it's impossible," all the knights answered as one.

"I'm very hungry!" said the king, who as he was young was very impatient.

And without meaning to he gave them a clue ...

"We'll throw you the stew made with ox from the land! Let's see if it reaches you," shouted two cooks from the kitchen tower.

James clapped, the oxen bellowed, and all the bells began to ring at once.

“Very good! You’ve got it. Today I got up feeling like eating meat. And yes, the word was stew!”

The crowds shouted “hooraaaay, beef steeew”, and licked their fingers. Because they loved eating well, but what they liked more than anything was getting it right.

And this is how, day after day, the young king and the inhabitants of this very special city amused themselves.