



Lost in the Mists of Time



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Lara lived in a faraway village, whose name no one remembered, and that no one ever heard about. It was a place that was lost in the mists of time. But Lara was a curious girl, even more curious than a cat. She wanted to know about everything in the world around her.



Lara read all the books she had at home and when she finished, she read all the books at school, and then she read all the books at the library. But in her little village, there weren't enough books to quench Lara's curiosity. And then something happened...



As usual, one weekend Lara took a ride with her father to the city of Ville Belle, to sell vegetables. Her dad drove while she sat tucked in among the vegetable boxes.



The man who came to her stand looked rather unusual. He had a very pale face yet his nose and cheeks were as red as the tomatoes she was selling. His eyes were as blue as the sky and his hair as white as milk. He looked at the tomatoes and asked “How much for a tomato?” but it was in a language Lara didn’t understand.



Lara shrugged her shoulders and looked down. She couldn't understand him. So he put his hand in his pocket and got a strange little device. He touched the screen a few times, then he said in her own language, "How much are the toma- toes?"



Lara eyes' opened wide in surprise. How did the man learn these words just by glancing at that little device? The man smiled and showed her his mobile phone and said, "I have a dictionary on here, with so many other things to read as well."



Lara packed up the rest of the vegetables at the end of the day. But she could think of nothing but the man's phone that somehow held so many dictionaries and books. As she collected her boxes, she saw an ad on one of the empty cucumber boxes.



It was the picture of the same phone. It read “Limited time offer – only one hundred dollars. Offer ends at the end of the month. This smart phone provides Internet access and connects you to the whole world for the low price of one hundred dollars!”

Special Offer

100 dollars!



On the way home, Lara showed her father the ad. She excitedly asked him, "Dad, can we get it?"



Her father replied, “My dear, it will take all our savings to fix our roof. I’m sorry, dear, but we just can’t buy it now.” But Lara was determined to find a way.



The next morning, Lara went to see her neighbor, Martin. She asked, “Would you hire me to watch your sheep?” Martin was so bored watching the sheep so, without hesitating, he agreed.



Lara took the sheep to the pasture and sat down to watch them, but then she started to read. She dove into the book and forgot about the sheep. She didn't notice that they had all run away!



Martin came back at sunset, surprised to find only two sheep there. His face got red and he and Lara spent the evening looking for the rest of the sheep. Martin refused to pay a penny to Lara.



Only five weeks were left on the limited time offer. Lara decided to plant fast growing plants like radishes, onions and lettuce, but would they grow fast enough?



After a whole month of planting and watering, Lara was so pleased with her harvest. She collected it with her father and went together to sell it in Ville Belle.



Lara set up her shop and sold her all the vegetables! Only two radishes, that were stuck together, remained. A man passing by asked her why were they stuck. Lara's eyes twinkled as she said, "The radishes' mother left and went to her sister and never returned so their father got married to a beautiful radish with green leaves. From that day on, the two radishes decided to stick together forever so nothing would separate them." The man gave her one dollar for the radishes and five dollars for her clever story.





But on the way home, tears poured down Lara's cheeks as she counted her money and found she had only collected fifty dollars - she only had half of what she needed! Her father hugged her and said, "I blame the radishes..." reminding her of the saying "Is there anything cheaper than radishes?" That made them both start laughing and she felt better.



There was only one week left on the limited offer and Lara only had half of the money. There was no time to plant more radishes. What else could she possibly do to earn money for the smart phone? Then she remembered the old man and the story of the two radishes. She got an idea.



The next day after school, she got a chair and sat in the middle of the playground and said, "I'll be telling stories every day after school. If you want to attend, each story will cost 50 cents."



On the first day, only three of her friends attended. On the second day, there was only a small crowd and on the third day as well, until...

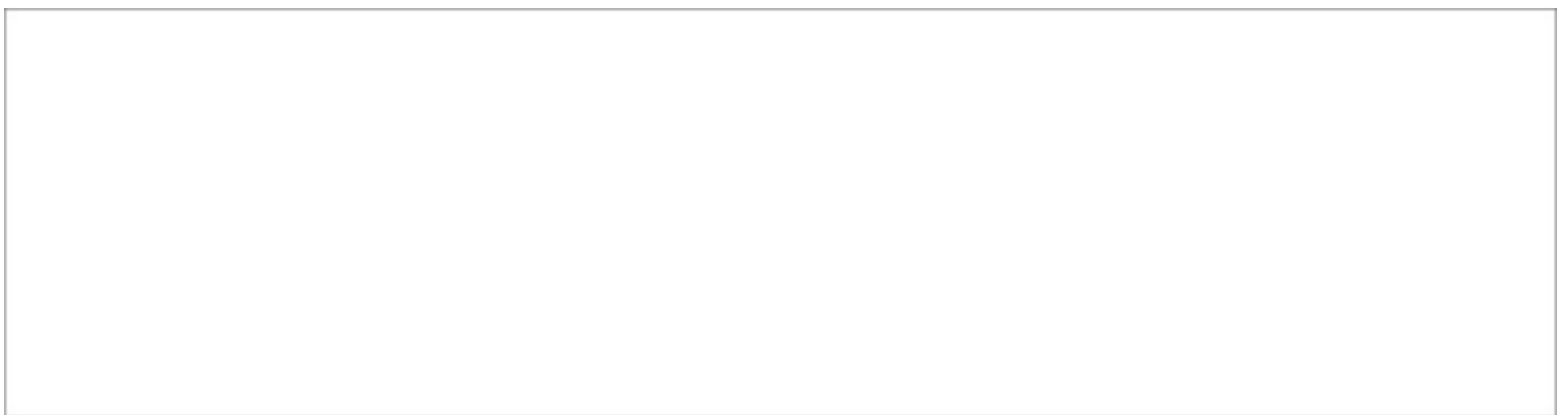


Word of her lovely stories began to spread quickly. Only three days remained until the offer ended. But on the fourth day, many people came to listen to her stories, and not only children. People from the other villages came, too!



That weekend, she went to Ville Belle with her father. After she carefully counted, she handed the storekeeper one hundred dollars and then he handed her the smart phone for which she had worked so hard. But does this mean that Lara now knows everything?

Special Offer!



Well, certainly not, but now she can search and find the answers to her endless questions.



The End