

Dave Striver loved the university. He loved its ivy-covered clocktowers, its ancient and sturdy brick, and its sun-splashed verdant greens and eager youth. He also loved the fact that the university is free of the stark unforgiving trials of the business world —only this isn't a fact: academia has its own tests, and some are as merciless as any in the marketplace. A prime example is the dissertation defense: to earn the PhD, to become a doctor, one must pass an oral examination on one's dissertation.

Dave wanted desperately to be a doctor. But he needed the signatures of three people on the first page of his dissertation, the priceless inscription which, together, would certify that he had passed his defense. One the signatures had to come from Professor Hart. Well before the defense, Striver gave Hart a penultimate copy of his thesis. Hart read it and told Striver that it was absolutely first-rate, and that he would gladly sign it at the defense. They even shook hands in Hart's book-lined office. Dave noticed that Hart's eyes were bright and trustful, and his bearing paternal.

At the defense, Dave thought that he eloquently summarized Chapter 3 of his dissertation. There were two questions, one from Professor Rodman and one from Dr. Teer; Dave answered both, apparently to everyone's satisfaction. There were no further objections. Professor Rodman signed. He slid the tome to Teer; she too signed, and then slid it in front of Hart. Hart didn't move. "Ed?" Rodman said. Hart still sat motionless. Dave felt slightly dizzy. "Edward, are you going to sign?" Later, Hart sat alone in his office, in his big leather chair, underneath his framed PhD diploma.

*Simple Betrayal* (a story developed by BRUTUS)

Once upon a time there was a lady of the court named Jennifer. Jennifer loved a knight named Grunfeld. Grunfeld loved Jennifer.

Jennifer wanted revenge on a lady of the court named Darlene because she had the berries which she picked in the woods and Jennifer wanted to have the berries. Jennifer wanted to scare Darlene. Jennifer wanted a dragon to move towards Darlene so that Darlene believed it would eat her. Jennifer wanted to appear to be a dragon so that a dragon would move towards Darlene. Jennifer drank a magic potion. Jennifer transformed into a dragon. A dragon moved towards Darlene. A dragon was near Darlene.

Grunfeld wanted to impress the king. Grunfeld wanted to move towards the woods so that he could fight a dragon. Grunfeld moved towards the woods. Grunfeld was near the woods. Grunfeld fought a dragon. The dragon died. The dragon was Jennifer. Jennifer wanted to live. Jennifer tried to drink a magic potion but failed. Grunfeld was filled with grief.

Jennifer was buried in the woods. Grunfel became a hermit.

*The Vengeful Princess* (a story developed by MINSTREL)

*Jaguar knight was an inhabitant of the great Tenochtitlan. Princess was an inhabitant of the great Tenochtitlan. From the first day they met, princess felt a special affection for jaguar knight. Although at the beginning princess did not want to admit it, princess fell in love with jaguar knight. Princess respected and admired artist because artist's heroic and intrepid behaviour during the last Flowery-war. For long time jaguar knight and princess had been flirting. Now, openly they accepted the mutual attraction they felt for each other. Jaguar knight was an ambitious person and wanted to be rich and powerful. So, jaguar knight kidnapped artist and went to Chapultepec forest. Jaguar knight's plan was to ask for an important amount of cacauatl (cacao beans) and quetzalli (quetzal) feathers to liberate artist. Princess had ambivalent thoughts towards jaguar knight. On one hand princess had strong feelings towards jaguar knight but on the other hand princess abominated what jaguar knight did. Suddenly, the day turned into night and after seconds the sun shone again. Princess was scared. The Shaman explained to princess that Tonatiuh (the divinity representing the sun) was demanding princess to rescue artist and punish the criminal. Otherwise princess's family would die. Early in the morning princess went to Chapultepec forest. Princess thoroughly observed jaguar knight. Then, princess took a dagger, jumped towards jaguar knight and attacked jaguar knight. Jaguar knight was shocked by princess's actions and for some seconds jaguar knight did not know what to do. Suddenly, princess and jaguar knight were involved in a violent fight. In a fast movement, jaguar knight wounded princess. An intense haemorrhage arose which weakened princess. Jaguar knight felt panic and ran away. Thus, while Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli (the god who affected people's fate with his lance) observed, princess cut the rope which bound artist. Finally, artist was free again! Princess was emotionally affected and was not sure if what princess did was right. Princess was really confused. The injuries that princess received were very serious. So, while praying to Mictlantecuhtli (the lord of the land of the dead) princess died.*

*The Lovers* (a story generated by MEXICA)