

Kingdom

The knight stands, both hands resting on the hilt of his towering great sword. One good swing with that mountain of steel, and it will be over. Gripping my shield and sword tighter, now, I stand ready. My only advantage is speed.

I rush at the warrior.

He deflects my strike with ease.

The knight returns with a mighty blow to my shield. I feel the power of the attack through my arm.

I can't afford even a single hit.

Again I strike, targeting his exposed chest.

Only a glancing blow.

He retreats a step.

I follow with a flurry of steel.

Unfazed, the knight raises his great sword over his head.

The air parts for the blade as it falls.

I dodge forward, circling to the right and slipping behind him.

With his back to me, I drive my foam sword into his back.

I've won.

I help my friend, George, up and we exchange comments about the fight. We sit in the shade of the trees and spend the rest of the day playing with our foam toys, dueling in the summer sun.

I spent countless summers playing with my friend, creating stories and worlds to explore. Now, I sit on my couch looking out the front window at the park, thinking of all the games we used to play. George moved to England to live with his father and attend university. Soon, I will be off to college too. I wonder if anyone else will continue to explore and defend our kingdom once I am gone.

My brother's giggles snap me out of my state of nostalgia.

My little brother, Zachary, sits on the couch in his pajamas, watching mindless YouTube videos in the afternoon. I ask him if he wants to play outside.

He declines.

This was the moment I decided I want my work to inspire young people to use their imaginations. I want to create worlds where a child can pretend to be a knight slaying a dragon, an astronaut exploring the unknown, or a superhero fighting crime. I want my work to make people imagine.