

The Tale of Rose and Ed

**The Knight
Who
Remembered**

BY ALEX BROWN

TALES OF MINZ

A Cobbler's Tale
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THE TALE OF ROSE & ED

A House Named Haven
The Storytellers
The Knight Who Remembered

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The Tale of Rose and Ed

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Remembered**

Alex Brown

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THE KNIGHT WHO REMEMBERED

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*To Nic, without whom this story would be very, very
different—and not at all better for it.*

Foreword

I've stared at the white, blank page long enough now. Writers do that from time to time, Dear Reader. More often than they'd like to admit, actually. They'll stare at the empty page, at a loss for words, because they don't know what comes next. That isn't my problem. The words have not been lost upon me, and I know what needs to be written. And yet, I've stared at this page, not wanting to mar its beauty with ink.

I've thoroughly investigated the lives of Rose and Ed Bode, and what really happened to them and their parents, to *The Storytellers* and PATTOS, all those years ago. I've shared my findings with you, Dear Reader, throughout the past two installments of this strange and twisted tale. I promised to finish what I started, no matter what my research might unearth. I've uncovered dark and malevolent mysteries, yes, but I've also discovered great deeds of bravery, friendship, and love.

So why do I hesitate? Why does my hand tremble as I pick up my pen? Perhaps it is because selfishly, I do not want this long chapter of my life to end. I started researching the lives of the Bode children as a younger man. I threw myself into the task wholeheartedly—perhaps even foolishly. I did not know the price I'd have to pay—the toll it would take on me.

The years have come and gone. I've experienced great joys and terrible sorrows in my search for answers

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to questions I didn't fully understand. And now, at the end of it all, I'm afraid—not because of how *The Tale of Rose and Ed* ends. Rather, I'm afraid because I don't know what comes next. I've dedicated so much of my life to the telling of this tale. What will I do when it's done?

I apologize, Dear Reader. I forget myself. You aren't here to listen to a writer's existential fears. *You* are here because I've made a promise to you. A promise that I will finish what I've started. I owe you that much. I owe much more to Rose, Ed, and everyone else affected by this tragic tale. Their story deserves to be told. By the final page, their story deserves to meet its true and proper end. You are here for that story, and I've delayed its ending long enough.

Come, now. Listen to the final pages of *The Tale of Rose and Ed*.

Chapter One

Shadows Waiting in the Wings

If this book were to follow the pattern stories normally take, Dear Reader, we'd find our protagonists right where we left them at the end of the second book.

Ed Bode would be sitting up in bed, still recovering from a debilitating fever brought on by an unexpected swim in an icy river. He'd be surrounded by the members of the Strobel family, alongside Nessa Roth and Argos, who all just volunteered to help Ed find his Uncle Peter's research on the shadowy organization of PATTOS.

Rose Bode, having just taken her newfound friend's hand as he promised to join her on her search for her captive parents, would be sitting behind Charlie on his motorcycle, riding down a forest road with the autumn leaves scattering in their wake.

If this were a story, we'd pick up right where we left off, as if no time had passed whatsoever. But you should know by now—this is no story. As such, if we were to start this book where last we saw our protagonists, we would not find them there. They've moved on. Time has passed. Nearly three whole months' worth of time, in fact.

However, it is necessary for us to linger in the places where our protagonists once were. Though they've moved on, there are still others who make up the cast

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of this tale. They lurk in the shadows and go about their business in the background of the story. Without their actions, this would be a very different account indeed.

You've met some of these individuals already, but it has been many pages since last you've seen them. Others you still haven't met—but you've seen the consequences of their actions all the same. Soon enough, they will play a larger role in the events about to unfold. For that, it is necessary that you become acquainted with them now. Allow me this opportunity to shed some light on their doings.

We begin our tale where last we saw Rose Bode and Charlie—the former agent of PATTOS and current companion and protector of the elder Bode child: A faint tendril of smoke still curled lazily from the broken and charred pieces of wood encircled by stones. Other than that, the forest was silent; all was still. No birds chirped in the changing trees; no other woodland creatures made a sound. Then, a fallen branch snapped underfoot, and two individuals stepped into the forest clearing, making their first appearance upon the pages of our story.

You haven't seen them before; you haven't had the displeasure of making their acquaintance. But, you *have* borne witness to plenty of their handiwork already. Their names are Esben and Nora. They are agents of PATTOS. Observe them carefully.

One was a mountain of a man. He wore a long, black overcoat with dark clothing underneath. His hair was cut short, and a neatly trimmed beard obscured his features. His eyes, hidden behind sunglasses, were dark and cruel, searching the clearing with careful precision.

The other individual was a spindly, spider-like woman. Her clothing was similar to her companion's, but there the similarities stopped. Her hair was long,

gray, and wiry, and her face seemed frozen in a perpetual frown. Her eyes were beady and narrowed, as if by sharpening her gaze she could pierce through a person with nothing but a glance. She may have even tried doing so on one or two occasions. When that didn't work, she resorted to other, more effective methods.

I've told you how dangerous an individual Charlie was to *The Storytellers* and *The Wanderers* before he was encouraged by Rose Bode to change his ways. I cannot stress enough how much more deadly Nora and Esben were. To give a forewarning of the future havoc and violence they would bring to bear upon the final pages of this story, these two individuals were responsible for many terrible, terrible deeds.

They were the ones responsible for the murders of so many members of *The Storytellers*, including Peter Bode and Chris Adler—Vanessa Roth's husband. They were also the ones responsible for abducting Marvin and Evelyn Bode on a Sunday afternoon, late in the summertime; the reason much of this tragic tale has taken the form it has.

As for why we find them stepping into the light after lurking in the shadows until now, they were also the ones charged with recovering a stolen journal from the hands of a former agent of PATTOS, now turned traitor to their cause. That is why we find them in the deserted forest clearing mere hours after Rose and Charlie abandoned it. They were hunting our heroes, and they were not far behind.

But they didn't know that.

Nora and Esben stood for a moment in the clearing, looking around. Esben lumbered over to the darkened campfire and poked at the ashes with the toe of his boot. Then, he stooped over to feel for warmth from the deadened coals. A scowl passed across his face;

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the giant man was irritated as he glanced back at his companion.

"They're gone, Nora—no way of telling which way they went. The trail's gone cold. There's no indication they burned Kahl's journal, at least."

"If they haven't burned the journal yet, there's a reason they're keeping it. Leverage against us, perhaps," the old woman suggested.

"Or proof to show the authorities," offered Esben, and Nora nodded with a grimace.

"That'd be extremely unfortunate," she said. "In either case, I don't believe they'll do anything with it. Not just yet. We still have the girl's parents. As long as we do, they wouldn't dare do anything that would jeopardize their lives."

"So, what do we tell the Raven?"

The old woman's perpetual frown somehow deepened. She put her hands in her overcoat pockets and glared at their surroundings as if somehow the forest was to blame for their failure. The trees should have known to keep their prey from leaving. Nora stood there, with a pained expression on her face, as if she were going through some excruciating experience. Esben recognized this to be the look his companion adopted when she was thinking deeply.

"Well," Nora said finally, her face resolving itself back into its familiar frown, "there's no need to tell the Raven anything at this point. No sense in angering the man. We don't need to track them down. We have something they want. Eventually, they'll make their way back to us, and we'll be ready for them when they do."

Esben let out a deep chuckle. "We have a trap to set, then."

“Yes, we do,” agreed the spindly, spider-like woman. She laughed with her companion—a wheezing, cackle of a laugh.

The two agents of PATTOS left the small forest clearing and it became abandoned once more. They went off to prepare a trap for our protagonists—a sinister trap that we’ll come across in a few short chapters’ time. They left to introduce chaos, strife and, if they had their way, *death* into our grim tale. It was what they did best, after all . . .

There is one more place to which I’d like to draw your attention—the place we last saw Ed Bode, in *The Luthier’s Workshop*. This encounter takes place right on the edge of the continuation of our protagonists’ plots. Nearly three months have passed.

The Luthier’s Workshop was darkened and vacant. Yet, it was not vacant for so long that dust began to gather upon the instruments. Ed and his companions had left a mere day beforehand.

The shop sat in darkness, with the sign on the front flipped to “Closed.” Night dawned on the world; the town streets were mostly empty. Nothing was heard in the shop where music once was played; all was still. Then, there was the sound of muted voices from outside the shop door—two shadowy figures in quiet conversation on the doorstep.

“The shop’s dark—I don’t think anyone is here.”

“Katherine gave me a spare key several years back. Let’s see what we see.”

There was the sound of keys jangling and one being inserted into the lock. The key turned, the door opened, and two figures stepped into the darkness enveloping *The Luthier’s Workshop*. After a moment of fumbling about in the dark along the length of the wall, the taller of the two managed to find the shop’s light switch. The bulbs overhead flickered into existence.

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You know these two individuals, and you know them well. They simply haven't been upon the pages of this story for quite some time. One was tall and lanky. He wore an olive-green jacket, a long-sleeved, faded gray shirt, paint-splattered jeans, and boots that had seen better days. He had shoulder-length gray hair and an impressively large beard. The other individual was shorter than him by about a foot. His gray hair and beard were also shorter than his companion's. He wore dark jeans, boots, and an oatmeal-colored shirt with a cozy sweater.

"Ah, that's better," Hank Ahlers squinted and blinked as his eyes adjusted to the light in the shop. He turned as his companion stepped past him to walk toward the middle of the shop. A frown passed over Hank's face as he watched him. "What is it, Al?"

"They're gone, Hank."

Albert Bode stood in the middle of the empty workshop. He stared at their surroundings and didn't speak again. A look of worry set itself on his face, and his old friend noticed. Hank moved over to Albert and stood next to him in a show of quiet support. He scratched his beard for a moment before speaking up softly.

"We can look around upstairs as well, Al. Perhaps we'll find some clue as to where they went."

Albert shook his head frustratedly. "What if we don't, Hank?" he demanded. "We've been looking for my grandchildren for *weeks* now—what if we don't find them?"

Hank put his hand on Albert's shoulder and looked at him with determination in his gaze. "Al, we'll find them. They just have a head start on us, that's all."

Albert looked momentarily relieved, but the worry still remained as he nodded. "Hang on, Rose and Ed,"

he murmured his breath as he and Hank left the main room of the workshop. "I'm coming for you."

So, you see, the Bode children were not where we last left them. They had moved on—each with their tasks set before them. Their story threads were already unwoven, sending them off on their own journey and story. Whether or not their story threads will be woven together again remains to be seen.

As such, one of the Bode children went off, searching through the dark, murky secrets of the past, while the other went searching through empty warehouses and former fronts for PATTOS. One went to find her parents—the other to find answers.

Rose journeyed into the vast unknown surrounding her. Ed went to the place where everything ended, and everything else began—a place where once there was comfort and hope. He returned to *Haven*.

About the Author

Alex Brown is the son of two teachers who impressed upon him from a young age a love for reading books of many different sizes, shapes, and genres. Along with that love came the love of telling stories and writing about fantastical lands and people.

He lives in Wisconsin with his lovely family and is most likely writing various works of fiction and drinking lots of coffee right now. *Lots.*

You can keep up-to-date on his writing projects by visiting his website: **alexbrown.blog**. There, you'll also find free short stories, whimsical blog posts, and more.

