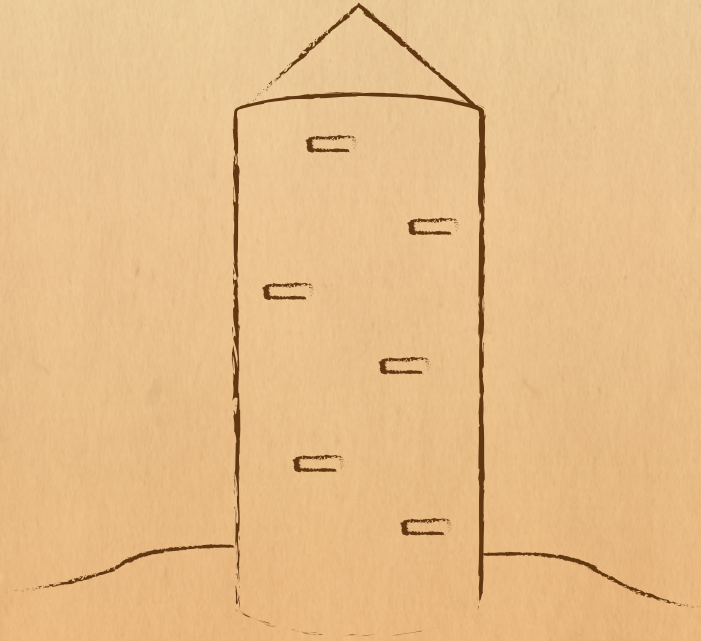


## The Master Builder



### The Tower

On the third day, the two men came to a tower, almost as tall as the eye could see. From the topmost, narrow window, a pair of distant eyes peered down. "Hello", they called up to the tower's resident. "Hello", came a woman's wary response. "How are you?" they asked, both understanding the incredible power of this question. "How am I?", she thought as she observed herself and her surroundings. Awareness began clearing the clouds that engulfed her mind as they so often surrounded her tower. "I'm safe", she replied, "Safe from all the dangers of this world". "I have spent years building this tower so that none can harm me. From here I can see much of the earth but I cannot not touch it. I look down on others when my greatest wish is to look them in the eye, to connect. I see now that I have created my own prison and I am quite lonely."

"We understand" said the men. "We too have hidden from others, through fear, in the past, but we are changed". "We are building a path and you are welcome to join us if you wish?". The woman realised she been cut-off for far too long and would like to taste all this world has to offer. Even if some flavours may prove to be bitter, she would relish the experience.

"I would join you, but I am too scared that if I jump, you will not catch me". The men accepted her fears. "We would not expect you to show us so much trust when we have done nothing to earn it" said the first man, "nor to jump from such a great height" added the second. "We will build a stairs to reach you. Perhaps when we get there you will be ready to trust us enough to leave your tower".

Both men worked together, getting closer to the top, step-by-step. As the hours passed, all three spoke together, sharing their life-stories, building a trust as strong as the tower itself. However, just when they reached the turrets, the men climbed back down to the bottom of the tower.

"Are you leaving me? Have my stories made you change your mind?" she called out to them. They smiled in response, "We want you to join us even more, for you are just like us. We simply decided to wait for you to come when you are ready". "It is your choice". Having learned of their pasts, seen the effort the men made, and happy that they acknowledged her right to choose, the woman understood that she was safe to join them and did so with ease.