Once upon a time there lived a young farmer’s son named Sam. He had lost his mother when he was young & his father was too old & sick to work. Sam toiled in the fields the entire day. They lived in a small home happily in the kingdom of Borduria.

The ruler of Borduria was fair & just. Peace prevailed in the kingdom. The king knew age was catching up. He needed to find a successor who would also be the husband of the apple of his eye-princess Irina. Irina was a maiden whose skin paled the complexion of the moon. Her perfect features ensured she was desired by men from within & outside the kingdom. A beauty with brains, she understood the importance of a strong ruler.

It was thus decided that there would be a competition to decide the next team. Every bachelor in Borduria was eligible along with those from lands far & beyond. To test the skill & stamina of the contestants, a bunch of chickens were let loose. The person who would be able to round up all the chickens in the shortest time in an enclosure would win. One by one the men had their try but none were successful. Either they took too much time or some chickens would escape or both. As the disappointment kept increasing, the king wondered if indeed there was anyone worthy to succeed him.

Then stepped in a young, dark haired man (Sam). His torso told everyone, this was a person who worked in the fields daily. Sam initially wasn’t sure he could participate but decided to try his luck. He knew he had nothing to lose. Besides, herding chickens was a task he did almost every day at his farm. They say practice makes a man perfect. It took Sam less than an hour to round up all the chickens.

Bordurians rejoiced-a new king had been identified. However, this wasn’t an ordinary tale where the king & his queen could now happily rule till eternity. The king’s minister wanted his son to rule. He had always harbored ambitions to rule Borduria himself & had tried to stage a coup but in vain. His son ascending the throne was the next best thing. “This is unfair!” said the minister, “This man is a farmer. He deals with chickens every day. He was thus prepared for this task, thereby rendering the contest unfair!” The minister found support in many of the losers & the protests increased.

The king was in a dilemma. He knew Sam won fair & square yet the minister had a point regarding practice. “The boy won fairly”, said the king, “however due to the protests, let him be assigned one more task by the person who is leading the protests. If he succeeds, he will have my daughter’s hand in marriage. Should he fail, we shall have another competition.” The minister was waiting for this opportunity. “Go I know not where & find I know not what”, he said, “Once you return with it, you shall be crowned king!”

Sam was bewildered. He had no idea how to fulfill his task but he dared not to refuse. He looked at the king but was met with silence. The king felt bad for the young man but a challenge was a challenge. If he was successful, no one would question Sam’s right to the throne ever again. Sam returned home with a heavy heart. His old father like all parents sensed something wrong with his son & asked him about it. “Just tired father”, said Sam. The old man continued to probe & ask about the contest when his son gave in & told him everything. “There, there”, comforted the old man, “It is just a challenge. Take rest now for the morning is wiser than the evening. Tomorrow we shall on how to accomplish your task.”

The next morning Sam was given a ball of yarn. The old man said, “Follow this ball of yarn till it stops. There you will find what you seek!” Sam thought his father was losing his mind with age but as an obedient son, he went about his task. He dropped the ball of yarn & it started rolling. It went through fields, forests, hills & streams. Sam followed the yarn without stopping but after 3 continuous days of journeying he was ready to drop. Just then the ball stopped in front of a hut. The hut was small, with a tiled roof. The windows were shut. The door opened once the ball touched it.

Sam went inside but found no one inside. The door closed behind him. “Welcome! You seem tired! Would you like to rest? ”, said a deep voice from behind. Sam jumped in fright & looked behind him but saw no one. “You look hungry”, the voice continued, “Let us get you something to eat.” Just then a table appeared with the choicest of food. Sam’s hunger got the better of his fear. He sat down to eat. However, remembering his manners, he said, “Why don’t you join me, good sir?” “Why that is very kind of you. I would love to!” replied the voice. As Sam started eating, he noticed the food disappearing from the table as if another person was eating. “Who are you, good sir, and where is this place?” he asked. The voice replied, “You are I know not where and my name is Brother Grimm. I am also called I know not what.” the voice replied.

Once Sam had finished his meal he decided to rest. After a sound sleep he decided to return home. “Brother Grimm, would you like to accompany me to my kingdom?” he asked. Grimm replied, “Surely! You are the kindest person I have met.” Sam started his journey back. After sometime he felt alone. “Brother Grimm”, Sam asked, “Are you still there?” “Do not worry”, Grimm replied, “I will always be there.”

When Sam returned to Borduria, people were overjoyed to see him. He headed straight to the palace to meet the king. “My king”, said Sam, “As per my task, I have travelled to I know not where and returned with I know not what. I now seek the princess’s hand in marriage.” “He is lying”, shouted the minister, “He comes back empty handed. He should be thrown into prison!” “Brother Grimm”, said Sam, “Why don’t you show them who you are?” “With pleasure!” replied Grimm. Grimm turned the minister upside down & said. “I am I know not what from I know not where! You should think twice before threatening any friend of mine!”

This was enough proof for the king. He immediately announced preparation of marriage of his daughter to Sam. He was relieved that a worthy successor had been found. Sam & Irina together ruled Borduria for many years. Their reign was peaceful & prosperous. Brother Grim continued to live with them & then their descendants. He ensured their story was never forgotten.