

2022-07-07 The Lamplighter

Deep in the Arctic Circle, not far from the North Pole, there once lived a lamplighter. He led a very dull (and chilly) life, but one day he dreamed of greatness.

Every year, he napped all through the endlessly-sunny summer, and woke but briefly in the fall to light the single lamppost in his small town, just in time for winter's dark night. Then, he'd sleep soundly until spring, and it came time to douse the lamp, before nodding off to his summer siesta.

One fall sunset, the lamplighter felt he should somehow aspire to more than this simple yearly rhythm of once-on, and once-off.

During his limited waking hours, he proposed his fellow townsfolk use TWO lampposts, one for night, and one lit during the day. This wouldn't offend his sleep cycle, and there'd be more light for everyone! This was vetoed because of the exorbitant cost of lighting oil, and that half the money spent would be wasted in summer's sun.

Despondent, the lamplighter slumped back to bed for another winter.

In his dreams that year, he saw cities with a sunset and a sunrise every 24 hours! Alas, living in such a fantasy would severely impede his pleasant sleep schedule. But, there was something to the beauty of a precisely and brightly lit skyline, splayed out to the horizon.

Rising from his bed (unheard of in the dark of winter for our drowsy lamplighter), he looked outside his door, and his face lit up bright. There above his head, and stretching out to the horizon, was the answer.

He hiked his lamp-lighting rod onto his shoulder, sharp flint in his jacket pocket, and set out into the distance.

The stars! He would light the stars that hadn't yet begun to burn. And, he could take his time. No one would notice if a star were born a year or two late, in case he just wanted to sleep a little longer.