“It was another beautiful spring morning in Astengurt, a small city known for its peacefulness, and the inhabitants had just started planting their plants in the farms.”

My grandfather took a puff from his pipe and continued with his usual Tuesday extremely long bedtime story.

“While the whole city was laughing, joking and listening to the music made by the birds, even the walls knew someone somewhere near the farms was not and never was happy. His name was Geoffrey
Chosser, a well-known maniac."

He paused for a moment, then suddenly changed course.

"Actually, he was not a maniac. He was just a normal kid, if we can call him normal or if we can call him a kid, since by the time of our story he was fifteen and had lived in the forest since he was born. No one knew how he could have survived from the age of zero to eleven, but that you will know later."

Now John (my grandfather) had me interested. For me, his stories were liberating because the good always win, which is not the case with me. I am always bullied at school and no one ever takes my side. I wish I could be in one of those stories of his.

Even at my age, I still love them. They are always awesome and extremely cool, mostly the Tuesday ones, which are called “Tuesday stories” just because they start on Tuesdays. But this does not mean that Grandpa tells them only on that day. They are very long and can take two or three days to finish telling. The previous one had been my favorite; it took three months to tell.

Another puff.

“Geoffrey was a lonely kid who knew no one except a goldsmith, to whom he had been presented by his grandparents shortly after birth.
They wrongly mistook him for an ironsmith as they wished to gain the friendship of a rich man, since everyone loved iron, but this man turned out to be a poor goldsmith."

I must have given him a puzzled look. Did he say “iron”? "Oh! I almost forgot to tell you! In those times gold was a very common metal, while iron was extremely rare, rarer then gold is today. So the friendship of a goldsmith was not much use for Geoffrey's grandparents, and Geoffrey was already extremely upset with them for having abandoned him in the forest. But being friends with a goldsmith did do wonders for Geoffrey.”

John took another puff. Then another, and another. I reprimanded him for not telling the story.

“The goldsmith was a man in his thirties with big, muscular arms, and a small mustache and a beard. He was short, shorter then Geoffrey. One day Geoffrey found a small, probably golden, object weirdly shaped. On one side was shaped like a circle, attached to a seven point star by a cylindrical protuberance covered with inscriptions. This piece of gold was very polished and reflected his face.”

Well, it was past midnight by now and if Grandpa did continue the story, I don't know exactly what he said because I drifted off to sleep.
That night I had strange dreams that are kind of hard to explain, as if I was dreaming about something else. All I remember is that, in the morning, I woke up with a jump, hitting my head on the ceiling. Since I built my bed high above my desk, this happens to me sometimes.

My name is Ted Dakota. Actually, my full name is Theodore James Dakota. I go to junior high, which is where, in a sense, this story begins. There’s no point mentioning the name of my school because it doesn’t matter. You won’t have heard of it and, truthfully, there’s nothing special or good about it anyway.

Have you ever been to a school where 80% of the kids are bullies? Sometimes I think at my school the only non-bullies are me, my cousin Emily, and Andrew. THE WORST FREAKING BULLIES ARE IN THE 7th, 8th, 9th AND 11th GRADES (I luckily don’t know any 10th graders)!

Andrew isn’t from around here, which is sometimes obvious from the way he talks. Not that he has an accent, it’s just that he sometimes says things in a way you know he’s not a local. He told me his family moved around a lot before they came here. We became friends after
his family bought a house near the school and he was put in my class.

On most school days, I have problems with Steve, a stupid bully (naturally) who they say flunked the last year of elementary school three times. I'm not so sure about that but he did have to repeat the first year of junior high. He never stops boasting to people about it. (Like I said, not a bright guy.)

All Steve does is tease and hit, which he is good at doing since he is older and twice as big as everyone else in our class. He goes around the school punching any wimp in sight with his friends, who like him are also flunked bullies. I could only hope that one day a kid who looks like a wimp but is actually very strong would stand up to him.

Well, of course, that was just a wish.

On Wednesdays, the first three hours are always math, which I am quite good at, and luckily, the teacher is strict and likes me as a student, so if anyone does anything bad to me (like Steve) they get a letter sent to their parents. When you get three letters you get suspended, which has happened at least ten thousand times, but it hasn't stopped Steve. Either he's making a collection of these letters, or he's trying to set the school record.
On this particular Wednesday, there was nothing special in how the day started that would even hint my life was about to change forever. The first three hours of school were ok, except for the fact that I had been unable to study, since Steve had kept me from taking home my books the day before, and I risked getting a G (not really, I got a C, but I could have gotten an F, which, if you’re not American or English, is the worst grade you can get).

I’m the only kid in class who doesn’t have a TV at home or a touch-screen wi-fi phone and portable computer of my own, because my parents were strict and now are dead. Oh, sorry, forgot to mention that. One day my parents disappeared and were found at the other side of the world. The only thing is that they were, of course, was dead.

At recess, I was bullied.

“Leave me alone you stupid pig!” I said, trying to be convincing but that, of course did not work.

“Oh no!” Steve laughed ironically “what are you going to do?” he continued “call your... mummy?” he said and laughed.

“I didn't know that your mom was a mummy! I only knew she was
dead!” whispered Emily, passing by. Luckily a professor was also walking by and Frederick, bully n. 2 in Steve's gang, noticed and started saying in an innocent voice, “I was just asking you to write down the math homework because I lost the paper where I wrote it.... Listen up, you!”. The teacher was now out of earshot so, as always, I was in trouble, but fortunately there was the sudden DRIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIINN! of the school bell. I was safe.

The last hours weren't so bad and after school I stayed late for dodge ball. My gym teacher, Ms. Hemphill, helped me get on the dodge ball team. Well, not quite helped. She forced me. I'm not light, but I can dodge well. People are usually surprised at how nimble I can be despite my size.

We were having a practice game and the other side was FULL of bullies. The bully side, as always, had all the balls. We practice with basket balls and when the other side has muscles to compensate for small brains, you don't want to be hit. Basketballs are heavy. Getting hit hurts.

I was ducking a ball thrown at me when, all of a sudden I felt disoriented, as if I was hallucinating. Everyone on my team was going
to the other side, the balls became thinner, lighter, and I realized, oh rats, those aren't basketballs! Those are arrows! At least eight....no! Twelve! Very slow! Now fast!

Jeez, I thought, I've got to move fast or I'll die..... literally. Things were happening so fast. I dodged to the left, to the right, ducked then jumped, twisted, dodged to the left again, and somehow managed to move through the flurry of arrows flying past me.

Then one of the arrows hit me! It didn't hurt that much, but when I saw it stuck in my leg and then still other arrows flying towards me, I freaked and fell to the floor and llqqqqqqqqqqqqq.....

A voice brought me back to reality. It was the teacher, shouting "someone give me a phone, NOW!" She found someone with the usual touch-screen wi-fi phone, and called a number. All I could hear was “No. Yes, a little. Of course! No." She hung up and said, “They're coming, don't worry!”

“Mm...... teacher? Who is coming and why?” I asked.

“Look at yourself!” I looked down and saw.... two arrows stuck in my leg. I had eight more in my back plus one sticking out of my shoe. In fainting I had fallen onto some of the arrows and pushed them even deeper into my body... I started to pass out again, hoping I would
wake up the next time in a hospital with no arrows in my body.

At least I was right about that part.