

*Otherworldly Fairy Tales by Ernest D. Hernandez*

**Story by Polekayno Books  
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## *Laranelle and The Great Polekayno*

Dedicated to Zackie

It came to pass in the twelfth year of Prince Polekayno's youth, that he was being groomed for kingship. His days were full of choice tutors revealing the knowledge of all subjects: war, literature, philosophy, science, the arts, and more. His training included physical fitness and self-defense. He even came to know spiritual rites. All was well until his advancement landed him in the plushest quarters reserved only for the monarch, a day for him to sample his future delights.

From this highest peak in the castle, he witnessed what was happening in his land. His father, King Poluthius, always gloated over progress of his land, especially at dinner. With a golden glint in his eye and a sly wink, he would often say, "Polekayno, your kingdom will be greater than mine! It's all taken care of. It's in the bag! HA HA AHA HA AH!" But today, Polekayno could see with his own eyes what that meant.

A quarter of the countryside was barren of trees. From the arrangement of workers and machines, it was clear that they would clear all the trees clean up to the volcano. King Poluthis wanted to build the most beautiful homes for the royal court and all the people. The king wanted to build shops and business centers and entertainment halls. He wanted to build on the most beautiful land of Volcano Island. The King promised prosperity and peace with his new "city" idea. But today, Polekayno knew he knew better.

Prince Polekayno thought he knew better before when he paid attention in his studies. He learned that the environment operated as a system and if one factor was removed or damaged then the entire equation of life could become unbalanced. But

he doubted himself because this was only book knowledge, not experience. He thought if this were the truth surely the leaders of the lands would abide by what's best for all. Unfortunately, all the leaders didn't know. Not even King Poluthius who paid for the tutors knew because he just hired the tutors since they were "the best." Now, Polekayno knew.

At dinner, he pleaded with his father to stop the city, but it was no use. "You shall have the richest kingdom, my son!! The richest ever! We shall rule forever!" exclaimed the king. "But Father," asked Polekayno, "the question becomes...rule over what?"

At this the King was enraged. Rather than sending the Prince to his plush quarters, he ordered him to sleep on the streets of the town. "Perhaps this way when you clutch the wind to cover yourself at dawn, you will be grateful to once again clutch the jewels of this crown. No matter it's cost." At this, Prince Polekayno was stripped of every adornment which identified him as Prince, except two things. They could not take his eyes, his sapphire flamed eyes. They could not take who he was.

Upon being put out, the servant Danat gave Polekayno a monk's clothes, a show of mercy and a disguise. This way he had a chance for some type of subsistence as it was customary for monks to survive on alms. Danat urged him, "Be blind. Hide your true self. When your father's anger has passed, someday you can return."

Polekayno: But Danat, What will I do?

Danat: Wherever you go, go to your inner place. Do your best. (It was the middle of the night.)

It was 3 a.m. by the time Polekayno found somewhere to rest. Not a plush bedding. Instead, the only safety he could find was at the top of a half-finished building. He

climbed the scaffolding of a construction site skillfully in the moonlight. As his kingdom slept, he was struggling to understand exactly how he found himself discarded for “only” an idea, perhaps a dangerous idea to the King. He clutched his cloak and rested for only a moment. The 4:30 a.m. wind wicked his sweat and he woke briskly. Seeing that the moon had almost finished crossing the sky, he practiced his martial arts and yoga then climbed down to the town.

The workday is starting- 5:00 a.m. Polekayno walked a bit carefully in the hooded cloak trying not to reveal his eyes while also trying not to step into anyone’s or anything’s right-of-way. In the distance, he saw a young woman picking up tin cans and other scrap metals from construction sites. This was Laranelle. He thought her so industrious and diligent, a happiness to witness.

As he walked, the road became more bustley. The air filled with fragrances of breads and carnitas and all manner of delicate eggs. Radios played the sounds of go-get’em, and engines frightened the night away. The morning was an encouraging smile and Prince Polekayno was happy to know his people were able to find joy even amidst the machinery that ravaged the land.

Laranelle and Polekayno drew closer along their paths. Laranelle notices Polekayno heading toward her. She is so excited to cross paths with a monk ever since a monk helped her fix the tire on her cart a month ago. She wants to repay the favor, but Laranelle has only an orange for lunch today. She hopes it will be enough. She continues collecting scrap metal.

When they finally cross paths, Laranelle offers Prince Polekayno the orange. It takes him all his effort to just bow and say thank you as he needed to hide his smiling eyes. Laranelle introduced herself and told him the story of the broken tire.

She asked, “When is the next holy day?” He said, “All days are holy to them who are holy.” And they parted ways.

Not long after, there was a commotion - sounds of struggle - metal clanging - a voice calling for help! It was Laranelle! Two thieves were fighting to dispossess her of her cart and metal. She needed the metal for both the income it brought through recycling and her father’s projects. She was fighting to protect this livelihood, and today Polekayno would help.

As Polekayno arrived at the scene, the barons mocked him. “Oh, look how cute! A little monkie monk has come to save you. What?! Are you gonna chant us to death?! Ah ha ha ahahahah ha!” they laughed. Polekayno took the cart and rolled it behind him. He also brushed Laranelle behind him with a smooth stroke of his arm. He said, “On one side of this line is life. On the other side is death. You choose which side you want to be on.” while drawing an imaginary line between him and the marauders.

Then he moved into a defensive posture revealing his style of martial arts. The thieves were struck: Oh no, man! He’s one of those karate monks. All they do is train! Let’s get out of here! As the Prince came out of his posture, Laranelle said, “Boy, you monks sure know how to save me.” She had caught a flash of his eyes when he was moving out of his posture and at that moment, she knew he was really Polekayno.

“You must come to my home!” she exclaimed. “I am so grateful. We, me and my father, can prepare you a good meal. We don’t have guests every day. That is, if you don’t have other duties.” “I will go,” he said. As they walked, she told him about

her father and the contraptions he would make for worker health and safety. She expressed how she didn't see how progress must come at the cost of so much destruction.

Polekayno: You see it too?! I thought I was the only one.

Laranelle: We all see it. We are all concerned as this "city" is unsustainable in the long run. It's like two steps forward but five steps back. We're not even living anymore. We're just building this new way of life where there's only time to build this way of life and the peace of life is gone except for a few stolen moments.

As they drew closer to her home, Laranelle asked, "Tell me. Are you Prince Polekayno?" He replied, "I don't know who I am anymore. How did you know?"

Laranelle: I saw your eyes when you were facing the marauders. I thought it was just a rumor that you had been put out. I suppose truth can spread as fast as lies."

Polekayno: Can you tell me more about what your father builds for health and safety of the workers?

Laranelle: Oh yes!

Laranelle goes on to tell Polekayno about her father's role in the city. She told him how after every major advancement, a new technology was necessary to survive. She wondered how come they could not just be in peace without the "advancement." She wondered because she knew technically they could, but the real question was why wouldn't the powers that be allow it. Before she could tell him all about the new suit her father was making, they had arrived at their home.

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