

THE CLEAR REFLECTION



The Clear Reflection

Mark





Ren stood in the middle of a vibrant bamboo forest, his face tight with frustration. He had spent hours trying to find silence, but his thoughts felt like a swarm of buzzing bees that refused to settle.



He found Master Kaito sitting perfectly still by the edge of a small, murky pond. The old monk did not look up, his presence as steady and calm as the ancient stones surrounding the water.



Ren complained that his mind was too messy and that he could not see the truth of things. Master Kaito gestured toward the pond, where the water was brown and clouded with stirred-up silt.



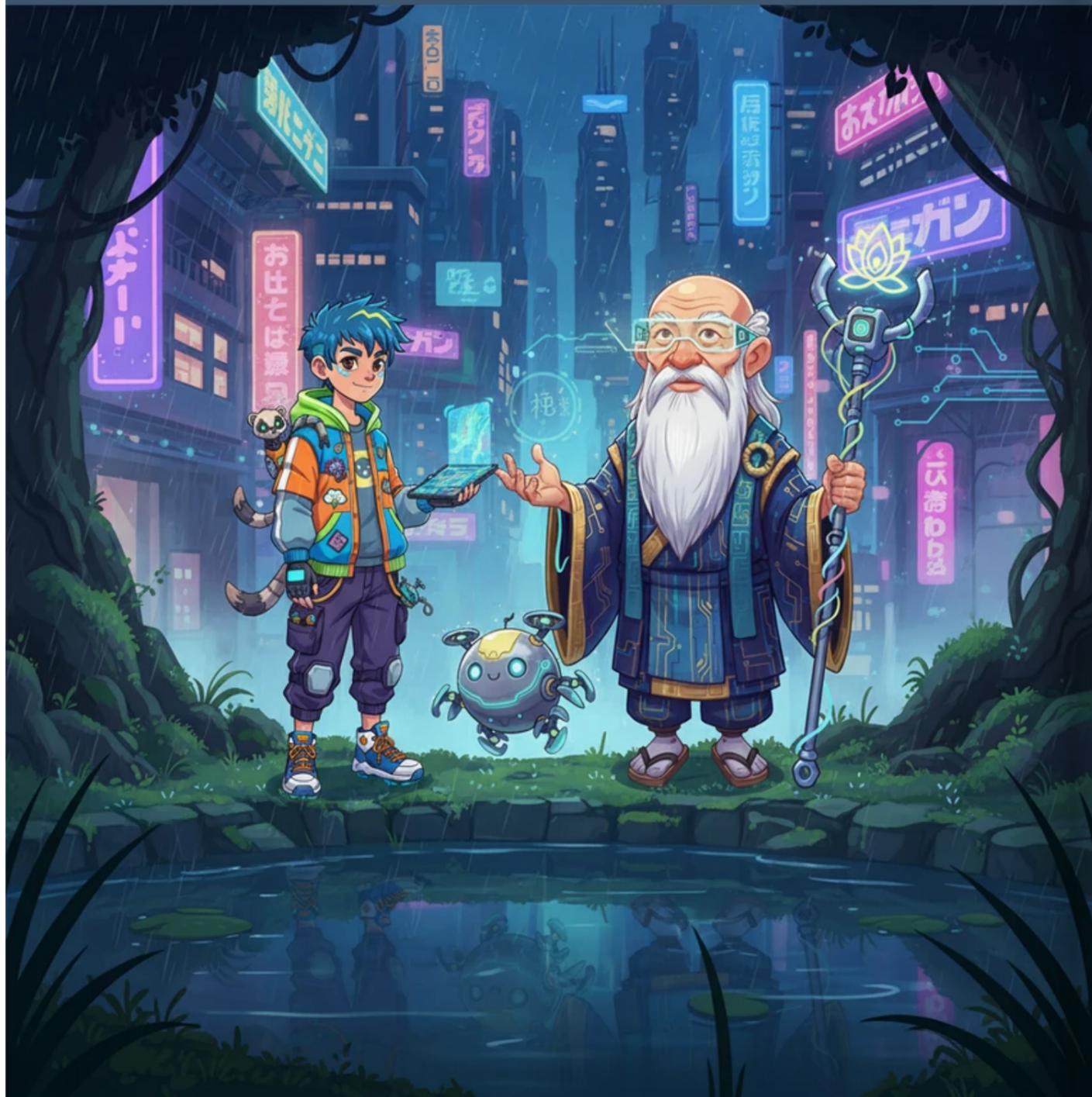
Master Kaito asked Ren how he would make the water clear again. Ren reached down, ready to use his hands to push the dirt away, believing that more effort was the only way to fix the problem.



The monk gently caught Ren's wrist and shook his head with a small, knowing smile. He told the boy that the more he struggled with the water, the more clouded and dark it would become.



They sat together in complete silence, watching the ripples fade into nothingness. The only sound was the soft wind whispering through the tall green stalks of the bamboo forest.



Slowly, the heavy mud began to sink to the bottom of the pond on its own. The surface became smooth and transparent, revealing the colorful pebbles and sand resting quietly below.



Now, the clear water acted like a perfect mirror, reflecting the white clouds and the deep blue of the afternoon sky. Ren looked at his own reflection and saw a face that was finally calm and steady.



Master Kaito explained that the mind is just like the pond; when you let it be, it settles itself. Ren felt a heavy weight lift from his shoulders as he finally understood the profound power of patience.



The two walked back toward the temple as the sun began to set, casting long golden shadows across the path. Ren did not need to chase peace anymore, for he carried the stillness of the pond within his heart.