Eli and the *King's Crown*

by Adam G.





The storybook town is preparing for the king's parade.
The king's crown rolls down the street.



It passes Eli’s feet.



Eli runs the other way.

Freeze.

“Why would anyone run away from a crown?”



The picture winds backward. The crown spins back onto the king’s head. A fallen banner rises. The clock returns to morning.



Eli and Nana are walking to the parade.



Almost everyone has a different hat.



A policeman lifts his cap from a hook. He is finishing his sandwich when he notices children gathering at a busy crossing.



He puts on his cap, puts down his sandwich, and steps into the street.



“What changed?” asks Eli.

“He remembered his duty,” says Nana.



“Keep the crossing safe. Follow the law,” says the policeman.
His attention moves from his sandwich to the people and traffic.



Across the square, a doctor ties on her scrub cap. She turns away from the parade music toward a patient waiting at the clinic.

“Someone needs my care.”



A firefighter fastens his helmet and checks his equipment.

“Ready when we’re needed.”



At the bank, a banker straightens his bowler hat. He studies a ledger.
“This money belongs to people who trust us.”



A lawyer settles her courtroom wig and reads an agreement. One sentence makes her stop.

“Wait. What exactly are we promising?”



At the baseball field, a player pulls down his cap. He stops waving to a friend and watches his teammate's signal.

"My team is counting on me."



Eli touches his bare head.

“Do the hats make them know what to do?”



“They learn their jobs,” says Nana. “The hats help them remember.”



“Remember what?”



“What they answer to. The law. A promise. The team.”



"Each hat points to something higher than 'whatever I feel like doing,'" Nana explains.



Trumpets sound.



The king arrives.



Eli studies his crown.

“That must be the biggest job.”



“And six things I must remember,” says the king.

He bends so Eli can see the jewels.



Diamond for strength. Ruby for courage. Sapphire for wisdom. Emerald for luck. Pearl for dignity. Amethyst for temperance.



“What’s temperance?”



“Knowing when enough is enough.”



The king touches the emerald.

“And luck reminds me I can’t control everything.”



“Even with a crown?”



“A crown reminds me to do my job. It doesn’t make everything obey me.”



“So who do you answer to?”

“The laws I must keep. The people I must serve.”



Eli thinks.

“And above being king?”



Nana opens her bag.

Inside is a plain yellow cap.

“That’s what my Godward hat helps me remember.”



“What job is that for?”

“It reminds me to turn my attention toward God, whatever I’m doing.”



She puts it on Eli.



“Up there?”

Eli tips his head back.



“You don’t have to look up,” Nana says. “God is beyond every picture we can make.”

Eli looks back at her.



“Let it remind you who you’re turned toward.”



A gust interrupts them.

One end of the parade banner tears loose. The great sheet swings across the street.



The king steps aside.

His crown tumbles.

It rolls downhill.



The crown passes Eli’s feet.

Then Eli hears Nana call his name.



She is holding the banner’s loose rope beside the pavement.

Eli runs back to her and takes the trailing end.



The policeman stops the traffic.



The firefighter secures the banner.



The doctor checks on someone who stumbled.



Further down the street, the baseball player catches the rolling crown neatly in his glove.



Eli holds the rope beside Nana.

His knees are trembling.



He feels the edge of his yellow cap.

“God, I’m scared. This is for You.”



His knees still tremble.

He keeps hold of the rope.



The firefighter finishes securing the banner. The street opens again.



The king receives his crown and looks at Eli’s cap.

“Did it make you brave?”



“I was still scared.”

“Then what did it do?”



“It helped me remember God while I was scared.”



The king pauses.

Then he puts his crown back on with care.



Nana reaches for Eli's hand.

Eli takes off the cap, turns it over, and smiles.

"I'm happy now. This is for You, too."



They walk on together.

The cap swings from his free hand.

The End