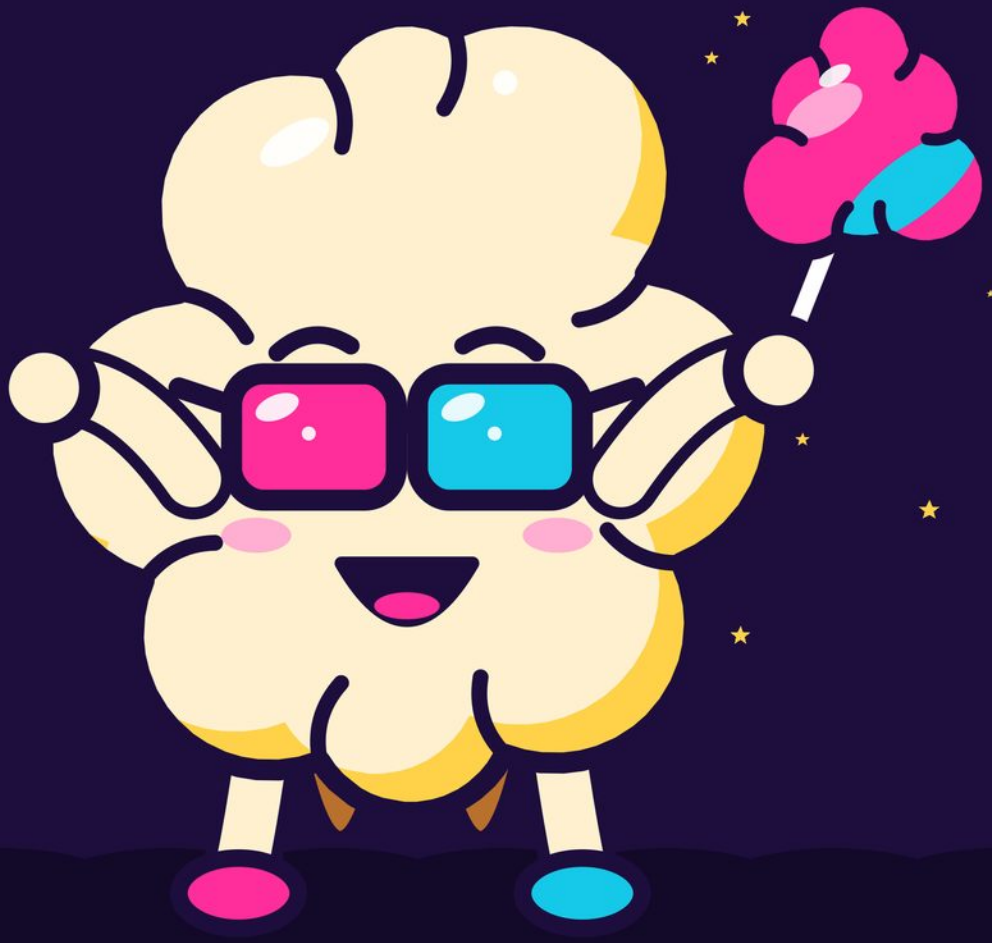
Kernel's Playhouse

Dreamlight Stories · DR01

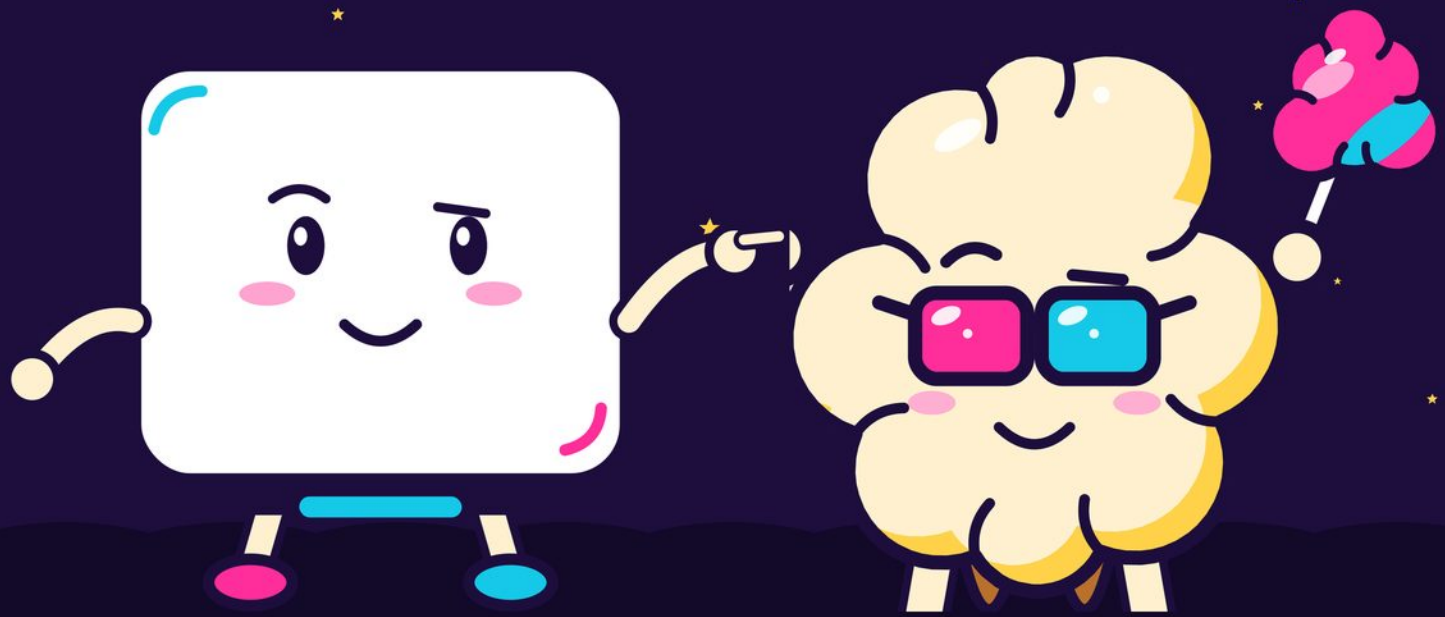
The Theater That Folded Its Lights



The last show was over. The magical movie theater was quiet now. Kernel stood in the aisle with his cotton candy, a soft pink-and-cyan cloud on a stick. He kept it close, the way he always did. "Good evening, theater," he said softly. The theater did not answer in words. But the velvet seats seemed to sigh, and the curtains swayed a little, as if to say good evening back.



At the front of the hall, Marquee glowed a little. Just a little. Marquee's light was the color of warm milk. "The theater is getting ready for its quiet hours," said Marquee. "Would you like to help it rest?" "I would like that very much," said Kernel. Kernel liked busy days. He liked big shows and loud cheers. But he liked this part too. The slow part. The end-of-the-day part.



Kernel walked slowly down the first row. As he passed, the aisle lights folded down, one, and then another, like flowers closing for the night. He saw a few popcorn crumbs on the floor. He saw a paper cup left on a seat. Not everything was tidy. Somewhere a seat had a little squeak. One light near the door blinked and would not quite stay on.

