The Adventure Worth One Billion Words

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The challenge: to make a story with exactly 1 billion words. This is a story about a young squirrel eager for adventure but is secluded in his hometown, denied of leaving the area. Little does he know, however, that his wish will soon be fulfilled when he finds a white raccoon and a map of the area, thus beginning his adventure that spans one billion words.

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Chapter 1: Prologue 1

The Evil Demon's castle, floating high above in Castle's in the Sky. The Overlord who rests in this castle over a millennium, soaring the vast sea of stars, conquering planets, subjugating the people, and claiming the vast cosmos as his own. However, today was different. For the first time in a million years, since the last adventurer who has been lost to the tides of time, who has been erased by the Overlord's will, who has now never existed, a new challenger has set foot on the quiet grounds of the Demon's Castle perimeter. Yes, it was the least likely of heroes who has managed to survive the many onslaughts of the Overlord's attempts to vanquish him thanks to the young lads cunning and quick thinking. It is none other than Nuttingham the Squirrel. The young red furred squirrel, with nothing but his cap, shoes, and vest has managed to conquer all adversities. He has defeated all legion thrown at him. He has overcome the challenges that stood against him, and he has travel for many years to finally reach the Demon's Castle and stop the evil Overlord once and for all. But he did not do it alone, for he had allies. Along his travels, he has recruited many friends and thanks to their help, he has managed to amass a small band of adventurers to help him reach this final destination.
The Overlord's anger has reached its apex. The Overlord can no longer tolerate the rambunctious squirrel and his friends. He is overwhelmed by the fact that he has been bested by a mere animal when he has conquered many stars. To this, he responds by having a no holds bar final bout and sends all of his minions after the daredevils who have defied him time and time again. His elf army, amongst other creatures, adds up to immeasurable numbers and are now targeting Nuttingham's posse. All orders are to destroy or be destroyed. There is nothing left to lose but their lives.
Nuttingham doesn't have much in terms of power other than his supernatural strength, his sharpshooting friend's arrow pistol, the many knives of his second protege, and the magic powers of the two young sorcerers. He has many other friends, however they were left behind to protect the planet Ashtar from further problems by the late Geo's influences. Nuttingham and his 4 remaining friends have to either fight off the army by themselves and reach the overlord, or wait it out until their allies come to their aid. He knew, however, that time was not on his side.
Nuttingham and crew are being chased by what number of legion are on the Demon's Castle perimeter. As they run off towards their goal, a voice shouts. "HURRY! AFTER THEM! They are approaching the castle of the Overlord!". That rasped and burly voice, it is the general with the blade, the most skilled of the Overlord's sword fighters, though for this occasion, he has acquired a comet gun, which is strange considering his skills with a blade cannot be matched. He continues to march on along with his coup to chase around the very troublemakers that have been causing him problems for so long. After all these years, he has never once managed to cut off a bit of the red fur from that rambunctious young squirrel, and now he wants to finish him before they reach the castle, for his pride is on the line. "DON'T WADDLE ABOUT!" he screams to his minions. "Should they reach the castle, it'll be your heads on a mantle! They have grown powerful over time. Who knows what they can accomplish if they should get close to the overlord. This is our last chance to defeat them. Use any force you can unleash upon them. Hold nothing back and use any weapon at your disposal. Use any means to defeat them. Even if you have to KILL THEM!". The giant roar of the coup that stretches for miles echoes throughout all of Castle's in the Sky. Nuttingham's ears do not listen for he is preoccupied with his mission.
"Looks like they got their entire force on our tails", says the knife wielder.
"QUIT LOOKING BACK!" replies Nuttingham. "Just keep running! RUN, RUN, RUN,RUN- STOP!" screams Nuttingham as he just abruptly stops before falling down a pit he did not notice. "Whoa! That was close", he says as he regains his composure, however that motion would fall flat as his magical companions on their broomsticks slam against Nuttingham and the two proteges. Luckily enough, they landed on the other side of the pit, which was not too far. The magical duo were apparently flying at such a fast rate.
"Are you guys okay!?" asks the boy.
"Yeah, don't worry about it" answers Nuttingham. "OH NO!" he continued as he was getting up. "GUYS! Get up! We gotta move and we gotta move NOW!". But there was no need for a warning as the barrage of comets were being fired at them at an alarming rate. Nuttingham screamed as he and his foot companions ran for

cover behind a giant rock while the two young sorcerers flew off on their broomsticks to safety.
The general orders his minions, "They're over the pit. Go and get them. YOU STUPID IDIOTS! JUMP OVER IT!" he screams as he witnesses his soldiers falling into the pit. Apparently they are not too bright to understand the meaning of jumping over a hole on the ground.
Over at the other side, the sharpshooter asks "Why did they stop shooting?"
"I don't know", replies Nuttingham, "but let's keep going before they start again."
They continue their progress, and the sharpshooter notices something in the distance. "Look guys, it's there. Right in front of us. The evil Demon's Castle".
Off in the distance, now clear as day, a blue castle, old and ancient, stands 2 miles away of their current location. "That's the Demon's Castle?", asks Nuttingham, "I thought it'd be bigger than that. Well that doesn't matter. Come on guys. Our long adventure is almost over. Let's go get that overlord."
Seeing the castle, Nuttingham's determination is now high as the skies they are on. After the giant trek of years, venturing and traveling through the worlds and stars, the many friends he has made, the many enemies he has conquered, the mornings of waking up for more adventures to come, Nuttingham is now witnessing the final destination. The end of the adventure that he so craved all those years ago.
"AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!". A scream is heard. The knife wielder. He has been shot by a comet! It was that nefarious blade general with his comet gun, who had the only common sense to jump over the gap. "This is as far as you go", he proclaims as he approaches our heroes. "Off with you!".
A feeling of dread fills the air. The unexpected attack from the general was not anticipated. Had seeing the castle and his thoughts of the end of the adventure cause this? Did he left his guard down enough that his companion ended up getting injured? Well it didn't matter how it happened because the general had his comet gun pointed at our heroes and he was not hesitant to pull the trigger. Is this it? Is this the end of the adventure? All of this happened so fast that there was no time to counter. The trigger was pulled...
Click...
Click, click, click...
"Huh!?", the general was puzzled. The comet gun had ran out of ammunition. The sharpshooter wasted no time. He pulled out his arrow pistol and cocked it. "Oh no!", exclaimed the blade general. Without waiting a second, the sharpshooter started pulling the trigger on his gun. The blade general quickly pulled out his sword and started swinging it with his mighty speed. The arrows flew fast but the sword was just as quick and precise and blocked all the arrows that were shot.
"I'll hate to admit it", said the general, "but your skills with a pistol outdo mine. I'll praise you for that." The general lunged his comet gun into the air and with his sword, sliced the gun into two pieces with each one flying on opposite ends. "That is why I will fight you with the skill I happen to have mastered. Come at me with everything you got." The sharpshooter was not amazed at all but he knew he could not underestimate the blade general. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the general was shocked by electricity. The general screamed as he fell from the top of the boulder he was on. The sharpshooter jumped out of the way to avoid the general falling on his back on the same spot. "OW!" screamed the general as he landed. "Who did that?" and out from the skies, the two little sorcerers were standing in front of him. "You little brats. You dare oppose me? Fine. I'll enjoy cutting you to pieces." he threatens them. The sharpshooter regains his disposition and resumes his defensive stance which the general notices. "You're still here?" asks the general.
The sharpshooter demands "What have you done to my friend?"
The general responds "He's probably dead. I charged up the comet gun to full blast on the last shot."
"NO! That's not true!"
"It won't matter if it's true or not because you're next. I'll cut you down along with these pipsqueaks."
"You can't take us all on at once!"
"Oh really?". As he was saying this, his sword was already mid way to creating an air slash attack. However our heroes were quick to react as they noticed this and proceeded to attack just as quickly. The sharpshooter shot his arrows while the sorcerers shot electric and fire attacks but neither party retained damaged as the general not only had complete control of his sword but he knew how to control the speed as well and to top it all of, the sword was so fast, it was not visible to the untrained eye. However, our heroes have dealt with this foe many times before. They were not the same as when they first met. They've encountered the sword many

times and had accustomed to the general's speed, which the general never thought of improving. This was a stalemate at best as the two parties exchanged blow after blow that hit nothing but the rocks all around. Unbeknownst to them, Nuttingham had managed to carried the injured blade wielder to a clearing, away from the fighting. The arrows that recoiled from the fight, however, reached them. There is no safe spot in this final journey. "Hey!", says Nuttingham, "Are you alright? Speak to me!"

The injured knife wielder struggles but responds. "No I'm not. That shot...was too much for me. I can't...even...get up. Go on without me. I'll just slow you down."

"But...but..." answers back Nuttingham, unsure of what to do. The fight with the sharpshooter and sorcerers against the general continued to rage, however, dealing with 3 opponents at once has started wearing down the general because, even though his speed with his sword was incredibly fast, it required a lot of stamina. The fighting stops for a brief moment. The general begins to pant.

"Huff, huff. WHERE ARE MY MEN!", he screams, "WHY HAVE THE NOT COME TO HELP ME?".

The sorcerer girl responds "We took care of those guys after you got impatient and decided to go ahead of them".

"THOSE WORTHLESS WORMS! What good are they for!?". The general was showing sign of fatigue. This was not good, he knew this.

"Getting tired?" he taunted. "HAHAHA! Well so am I, so how about-", suddenly, out of the clear sky, a giant boulder lunges into the air and smacks the general on top of his helmet. The sorcerers and the sharpshooter take this chance to run away for they had another problem that had higher precedence. The general sliced the boulder in half as it was bouncing off his helmet and nearly cut the girl sorcerer as she was passing by at blazing speed. "HEY! COME BACK HERE!" the general screams. Just then he hears footsteps. He turns around and sees his men, who apparently have finally managed to climb out of the pit. "Oh for the love of..."

Running as fast as he could, the sharpshooter jumped over a rock formation to get where his partner was, lying on the ground, even weaker than he was when he was shot by the comet gun. The sorcerers joined in shortly on their brooms. "Nuttingham!", asked the sharpshooter in an urgent manner, "Is he alright?".

"Yeah," answers Nuttingham, "but he's seriously hurt. He needs some serious help."

"Quick. Call Pursee and tell him to pick him up."

"But what about the bad guys?"

"We'll cover you before the cruiser comes."

"Okay." Nuttingham quickly grabbed his communicator and contacted the space ship that his friend Pursee was piloting. "This is Nuttingham. Come in Pursee. This is an emergency!".

Above the skies of the Demon's Castle, roaming about in case of situations like these, the space ship that our heroes rode on to reach the Demon's Castle was waiting above. Because it did not have any form of offensive features, it was not allowed to get close, however, our heroes were in need of the space ship. Pursee was prepared for something like this.

"This is Pursee. What's going on?"

"We got a man down and he's severely hurt. Get down here as fast as you can!"

"Alright. I'm setting a course towards your location". Just then, a giant explosion was heard followed by the ship rattling like mad. "WHOA!" exclaimed Pursee.

"What's happening?" On the outside of the ship, cloud demons were using their lightning attacks on the space ship. "I'm being under attack!", shouted Pursee, "I'm having difficulties getting pass them."

Nuttingham replied "Well get through them somehow!" while carrying his injured comrade between his back and big bushy tail, running away from the force behind their backs. The stupid soldiers who fell down a pit have finally caught up to our adventurers along with some black shell beetles buzzing around them. However all parties stop dead on their tracks, for in front of our heroes stood the flame general.

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Chapter 2: Prologue 2

Just when things couldn't get worse, Nuttingham and his friends come across the general of the flames. The flame general possessed the power to spew flames from his mouth, capable of controlling it at will.
"So what will it be?" said the flame general, "Come with me peacefully or be shred to pieces?"
"We're never giving up." said Nuttingham. "We've come too far to stop now."
"You're completely surrounded. Not even you 4 can take on an entire army all at once."
"Oh yeah, well we...we...we got a secret plan."
"Really? Well out with it."
After saying this, a faint roar was heard. It was small enough to notice, but it kept increasing, louder and louder. "What's that sound?" asked the flame general. The sound kept coming and coming, louder than the previous second. Suddenly, from the sky above, an object appeared. It was Puggly's space ship, falling at a fast rate. The flame general said "What is that?" in a prompt voice.
"My secret plan?" said Nuttingham confusingly. Without a second thought, every soldier scrambled out of the way in a mass panic, tripping over everyone else. Our heroes jumped out of the way as well as the flame general. The ship crashed landed onto the floor of the area. The impact was so great that it caused another pit to appear on the floor and it was so grand that it split the very earth they were standing, leaving a huge crevice. The area must have been pretty shallow to cause this. However, the space ship did not sink because luckily, the hole, though being extremely wide, was only big enough to have the ship hold on by the thruster and the front. The thruster was at full power and the after burner ended up burning some of the elf soldiers that did not get out of the way in time. When the dust cleared, Puggsly came out of the ship.
"Hi guys." he said with a big smile on his face.
"What's the matter with you?" replied Nuttingham in an angry tone.
"You almost crushed us."
"I had to increase the speed of the ship to escape the bad guys and had trouble putting on the brakes."
"Alright, alright, just take care of him wont ya?" Nuttingham quickly handed his injured companion over to Puggsly so he could recuperate. On the other side of the big crevice, the flame general was at full speed with another surplus of elf soldiers running as fast as he could to reach our heroes. "Hurry up you slugs." he shouted to his men. "We got them cornered! What in the world!?" He suddenly noticed the large crevice on the floor, something he did not anticipate. Not only that but also witnessed the space ship that was already on it's way back to the skies. "What the heck? A space cruiser? When did that..." and to add to his confusion, the 4 leftover heroes were on the other side of the crevice, departing forward to their destination. "NO!" he screamed. "STOP! WAIT! GET BACK...THAT'S NOT FAIR!".
On the other side, Nuttingham tells his allies "Come on guys. Let's get to the castle before they manage to catch up to us. Oh no, not you." Before Nuttingham and his friends was the fiendish flame general who appeared to have been waiting for them. "Did you forget about little ol' me?" the general taunts. "Well, when I'm through with you and your friends, you will always remember me as the one who barbecued you." Nuttingham replies as his comrade, the sharpshooter, joins him abreast. "I assume you have a huge army behind you."
"Of course. You are nearing the castle of the Overlord. We're not taking any chances on you trespassing. This is it for you. No turning back now. It's due or die."
"We spent years coming all the way here. You think we're going to give up when we are so-"
"GET DOWN!" screams the sharpshooter as he grabs Nuttingham by the shoulder and forces him to the floor. Just as sudden, a stream of flames barely brisk his tall and husky tail. The flame general was hawking up flames from his gullet while Nuttingham was talking. Truly he was not a patient, nor polite foe. As to show his prowess, the flames that were being shot out were brought straight up like a snake dancing and slowly returned to his mouth. "Sorry. Were you saying something?"
"Very funny." replies Nuttingham.
"Well I'm tired of you winning all the time." the general said, "The time to talk is over. Let's finish this once and for all." Abruptly after this, out of the corner of his eye, the flame general sees flashing lights of both fire

and electricity. Just as quickly though, he leaps high into the air. The electricity and fire were coming from the little sorcerers with their magic broomsticks. They were aiming for a surprise attack but unfortunately the general noticed this in time to avoid it. The general lands as the sorcerers flee. "Nice try there, but I know all your tricks by now. I won't be ambushed so easily. Now where were we?" The flame general suddenly starts hawking up, preparing another attack from his flame breath. This time the sharpshooter was prepared and started shooting his arrows, but he was not quick enough for the general spewed out his flames just as fast. The flames and the arrows collided and explosions were being set off through the middle of the battle.
"What happened?" asked the sharpshooter.
"Why didn't my arrows go through the flames?"
"That was no ordinary flame." said the general, "That was a flame enchanted with magic cards. I used a spell that can change the density of the flames, making them thick enough to block any projectile. Care for another sample?" He charged up another stream of flames and let it all out. Nuttingham quickly ducks to avoid the flames and the sharpshooter jumps up and aims towards the general. He gives a shot, but the general was not there! The fire was a ruse to lower their guards because his aim was to use his teleportation spell. The general teleported passed the sharpshooter and sinked his claws around Nuttingham's throat. The arrow from the pistol bounces off the floor as the sharpshooter watches in horror the general choking Nuttingham. The sharpshooter lands.
"Put your weapon down," the general demands, "or your friend here will be burned to death." The sharpshooter had no choice but to abide the decision and drops his pistol unto the ground. "Good. Now, give me the card."
The sharpshooter replies "You mean the Card of the Sun?"
"Of course! What else would I mean!? Give it to me!"
The sharpshooter, with a fierce growl on his face, reaches into his vest. The general starts to laugh. "BWAHAHAHA! I finally did it. I FINALLY DID IT! I've captured the Card of the Sun and these losers as well. The Overlord will give me a handsome reward!" All of a sudden a giant white light covered the surrounding area. It was very bright that it blinded the general and he ended up losing his grip on Nuttingham. "WHAT THE-" the general stumbled. "THAT'S NOT THE CARD OF THE-", then on the spur of the moment, a giant arrow pierced his armor. The general fell from the recoil on his back while screaming from the pain. The sharpshooter was not aiming to take out the card but used his magical medallion which carried the spirit of a fallen warrior, in this case, it was a centaur with armor placed on his horse body but fully covered on his human side. He was also an archer who carried magical arrows that could pierce the strongest of metals. "How..." the general spoke, "could I have fallen...for...such a...urk...AGH!". The sharpshooter went over to Nuttingham, who was lying on the floor, to make sure he was alright.
"Nuttingham, are you okay?"
"Yeah, I'm fine but why did you summon the medallion for? We were only going to use it for emergencies."
"I think saving your life counts as an emergency."
Nuttingham started to get up. "The medallion only had a little bit of power left. It's gone to waste now."
"Don't worry. I'll put the last of its power to use."
As all this was happening, the blade general was trying to cross the giant gap. He ordered his soldiers to build a bridge for him; by linking their hands together and having one soldier grabbing one end of the chasm and doing the same for the other side. "Stand still!" said the general, "Don't wobble about! You're going to make me fall!". As the general struggled to keep his balance on top of his soldier bridge, he looks up and notices the sight of the centaur warrior. "WHAT IN THE NAME OF LAR IS THAT!?" No sooner that he said this, a barrage of arrows where heading in his direction. It was a shower of golden arrows, striking the soldiers down. One hit the general in the shoulder. The general screamed from pain as he ended up dropping to the bottom of the chasm. Our two heroes, covering themselves with their arms from the magical dust being left from the arrows, were joined by their magical companions.
"You defeated the generals." said the girl.
"Yeah." replied the sharpshooter.
"To think they have been harassing us for years on our adventure, and now they're gone."
Nuttingham suddenly exclaims. "LOOK!" He pointed eastward in an exciting manner. Everyone looked in the

direction and suddenly a feeling came to them. Mixed feelings to be exact. No one knew what to expect at this moment, for they have finally arrived. They have finally reached the Demon's Castle entrance. The giant gates were upon them and they gazed at it feeling both a sense of pride and a sense of fear. However they were too preoccupied with the sight of the castle to notice the soldiers waiting for them at the bottom. There was a commandant along with his elf troops of a few 50.

"The two generals have been defeated, Commandant." spoke one of the soldiers.

"Yes, I know." replied the commandant.

"What do we do now?"

"We got no choice. Summon the monster to attack them."

"Yes sir."

The centaur warrior summoned from the medallion had used up it's last strength. It suddenly grew brighter and brighter then dimmer and dimmer. Finally only the outline was seen and slowly it started to vanish. Nuttingham looked at the sharpshooter. "The medallions power is gone but at least we've defeated the generals."

"Yeah," replied the sharpshooter, "but don't forget, there is still an entire army within the castle."

As if to break the mood intentionally, the ground started to rumble. It was a very fierce tremor that cause everyone to lose balance. The little sorcerers got down quickly but Nuttingham and the sharpshooter fell down on their backs. "WHOA!" cried out Nuttingham. "What's going on? Is this an earthquake?" As the sharpshooter was getting up, the floor beneath him was starting to crumble. He prepared to jump out of the way before the earth swallowed him, but to his surprise, the earth suddenly shot up. No. It was not the earth that raised him, it was a giant knife!

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Chapter 3: Prologue 3

The ground shook more and more, large rocks started flying everywhere. Something was coming out from the ground. The sharpshooter, who was surprised at the instance of the knife appearing before him was lucky enough that he did not end up standing on the sharp blades but rather on the handle. The very same handle that had two giant hands grasped around it! With no hesitation, he quickly jumped off the knife and landed on the shaking floor. The rumbling was fierce and our 4 heroes had to lay low on the ground to not lose their footing. However the tremor was starting to slow down because what was coming out of the earth would soon be revealed. First was the knife and its hands, then a large spout like protrusion was seen. Next came an eye followed by a giant mouth. At last, the creature submerged.

A tall monster that was 3 times bigger than our heroes. His head was on the bottom as a round shape. His mouth exposed his gums for he had no lips but his lower jaw was covered in his purple armor. The back of his head had rivets from his clad armor. His body was nothing more than a giant protuberance that looked more like a massive hump on top his head with small wings on the very top. Just before these wings, two giant arms with purple hands in armor were holding the knife. The hands were disturbing as they mimic those of a humans. This truly was a strange monster.

Our heroes stood still on the ground. The shaking had stop but the appearance of this creature had them stunned for they have never seen anything like it. They stared at it in amazement and awe for they did not know what they were looking at.

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

The monster roared as he quickly flew high up in the air. This startled Nuttingham as he jumped up and ran away while the others stood their ground. At a quick pace, the monster clutched his knife and dived down at an incredible speed, targeting the knife at our heroes. Our heroes saw through this however and quickly got out of the way before the knife began to lunge. The sorcerers took to the skies while the sharpshooter rolled back into Nuttingham who stopped at a good distance away from the beast.

"WHAT IS THAT UGLY MONSTER!?"yelled Nuttingham in a panicking tone.

"You just answered your own question." said the sharpshooter. No sooner that he said this, the giant knife was flung into their direction but thanks to their quick reflexes honed after many years of fighting off the bad guys, they managed to avoid the impact. The monster screamed as he was flying to retrieve his knife. His mouth unhinged a wide 90 degrees. He was a very frightening creature indeed. While Nuttingham ran for cover, the sharpshooter jumped up in the air and with his pistol ready, began blasting his arrows at the beast one after another. This was all in vain for the arrows merely bounced off the purple clad armor of the monster.

Nuttingham stopped on his tracks. Apparently he ran so far that he returned to the chasm caused by the space ship earlier. "Oh no." he said, "I forgot all about this giant hole."

The sharpshooter kept shooting and shooting but only scratches were achieved on the creature. "ARGH!" he shouted. "His armor is too strong." As he was saying this, the sorcerer girl was flying in for a fire attack, however the monster, willingly or unknowingly, swung his knife to strike and in a flash, hit the girl with his blade. The girl was pushed aback along with her broom, though both of them headed a different angle with the girl going further. "NOOOOO!" screamed the sharpshooter as he witnessed the girl flying off to the chasm.

"OH NO!" Nuttingham shouted as all he could do was watch as the girl and the broom were about to fall into the deep gap right in front of him. The broom had fallen in and was sucked by the darkness. The girl was nearing her end but suddenly a swift wind came about. It was the sorcerer boy. He quickly snatched her up mid way to her demise. "I GOT HER!" he screamed.

"You did it!" congratulated Nuttingham. "Now to take care of that monster!".

The sharpshooter was worried about the girl but the monster would not allow him to check on her so he had to keep fighting. But there was no progress as his arrows, no matter what part of the monsters body he hit, would bounce off. The giant knife, on the other hand, was a colossal blade because it smashed anything and everything. Flesh of the body would be no match. Another swing of the knife into the ground it went with the sharpshooter rolling forward, away from the blade in front of the monsters face. He kept pulling the trigger but even at this distance the arrows were ineffective. "WHY DON'T YOU DIE ALREADY!?" said the

sharpshooter impatiently. The monster rose into the air and the sharpshooter kept shooting at its underjaw, but as before, no damage was being produced. The monster prepared his knife, ready for another lunge. "If my regular arrows won't work, then I'll use my magic cards." As he said this, a giant boulder appeared in the sky, flying across, and it smacked the monster in the face. "RAAAAAAAAAAAA!" screamed the monster as he recoiled back and dropped his knife. "GET AWAY FROM HIM YOU UGLY MONSTER!" screamed Nuttingham as he grabbed another boulder and tossed it at the monster. The monster was hit once more and rolled even further back. "HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT!?"
"That's not gonna work." said the sharpshooter as he arrived at Nuttingham's location. "His skin is too tough."
"Well that's the only idea I have."
"Don't worry. I'm going to use magic cards to destroy him."
"You sure that's going to work?" Suddenly, the monster appeared before them, knife in hand, ready to strike our foes. Nuttingham and the sharpshooter were right at the edge of the chasm with very few steps left before they would fall down to the depths of the darkness below. "TOO LATE! DO IT NOW!" The sharpshooter took out a magic card out of his pocket with his index and middle finger and loaded it into his pistol. "Hey ugly," he called out to the monster, "eat this!". Right into the monsters face, he pulled the trigger and a explosion was triggered. Nuttingham held the sharpshooter from falling into the cliff by the recoil while the monster was pushed back by the explosion. The sharpshooter ran forward as he kept pulling the trigger. Flashing arrows, powered by the magic of the magic card, flew straight into the monster. The creature was bombarded with explosions. White smoke and red fire covered his entire body. The sharpshooter did not rest his finger and kept pulling the trigger, unleashing arrow after arrow as he ran forward. The monster was still walking back but the blunt force of the many explosions kept bobbing him until it could take no more and he fell into the ground. Nuttingham ran after the sharpshooter as he witnessed the monster fall on his back with puffs of smoke clearing around it. The sharpshooter was taking heavy breaths but held his pistol strongly.
"Huff, huff. There. That should've done it." The monster was on the floor but his knife was still clutched and his eyes were still open. Nuttingham walked closer to examine the creature.
"RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"
The creature got back up as if nothing happened. This sudden awakening made Nuttingham panic as he jumped away like he did the first time he met the monster. The sharpshooter was flabbergasted at this sight as he leaned back as the monsters breath was blowing against him. Regaining his composure, the sharpshooter ran back a couple of feet and joined Nuttingham.
"This thing is impossible to defeat." said Nuttingham, "What are we going to do?"
"It's not impossible!" said the sharpshooter, "He's gotta have a weakness. What can defeat him?"
The monster held his knife on his hands and positioned himself for another swing attack. However, electric sparks were seen in the air. A stream of them actually. They were heading towards the hands of the beast. They landed and the beast screamed as he threw the knife in the air from the pain. The knife spun in the air for a bit and began to descend. Faster and faster it spun. The knife then landed on top of the monsters head. It successfully pierced the armor and impaled the creature. The monsters pupils were compressed and his mouth opened as wide as it could. The creature's body fell and the beast laid on the ground and his pupils was suddenly gone. The monster was now silent. "His knife..." murmured the sharpshooter.
From the distance where they were, the commandant and his troops witnessed the events of the monster fight.
"They have defeated that monster all by themselves?" asked the commandant, "These are no ordinary heroes. Now we have no choice. Prepare to give your lives for the Overlord. We are going to fight them."
Back at the site of the battle, the boy flew down into the ground to meet up with his companions. "How is she?" asked the sharpshooter.
"Don't worry." reassured the boy, "I sent her back to the star cruiser. She'll be fine."
"That's great. Thanks for saving us by the way."
"I was aiming to distract him. I didn't knew I was going to be the one to defeat him."
"Alright then. The castle is right in front of us and it's only us three against an entire army. Even if we manage to make it to the Overlord, he'll be the toughest opponent yet. There's no turning back now."
"Don't be so sure." said the Commandant as everyone looked in his general direction, "we will not allow you to trespass the castle of the Overlord as long as we live, so proceed if you dare. We are ready."

The group looked at each other and the boy said "I guess we should get going."
"Yeah" replied the sharpshooter, "but before that, let's call in for backup."
"What do you mean?"
The sharpshooter grabbed the magic lamp that was next to his person, dangling from a string. "The magic lamp." exclaimed the boy, "I completely forgot about that."
"Come on out guys." said the sharpshooter, "We need your help." After the command, a bright yellow light engulfed our heroes. White figures were shown within this light. After the bright yellow glow dissipated, three strange, small, floating Djinn appeared before them: a small flame with eyes and a mouth, a round head with large eyes that were halfway closed and two arms, and what looked like a floating cloth with eyes and a mustache.
"What do you need of us today?" asked the fire Djinn. On the other side, the 50 or so troops were waiting the orders of the commandant with big smiles in their faces and their knives drawn and ready.
"Here they come." the commandant ordered. "Wait for my signal." Now there were only 3 heroes left: the young magical boy, the sharpshooter, and Nuttingham the Squirrel. Tension was building as both parties feared each other. However, our heroes knew of the dangers but were prepared to deal with anything thrown at them. They have come too far to give up now. "Well then..." said the sharpshooter. "LET'S GO!".
"ATAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA AACK!" screamed the commandant.
The troops rushed forward in a maniacal fashion. Hungry for blood, the elf troops race towards our heroes with knifes in hand. Nuttingham the squirrel jumped forward using his incredible jumping skills (and some magic cards for increased height) and got into the fray. An elf soldier was right behind him but he was not quick to react for Nuttingham used his bushy tail to knock him off his feet. The sorcerer boy launched up and dove down with his electrical attacks. His magic stunned and electrified the enemies below. The sharpshooter, with his restocked gun of magic cards, blasted away at the roaring crowd. Elf soldiers fell one after another as the arrows exploded as they made contact. Even if the arrows hit the floor, the explosion caused the soldiers to be blown away. "Don't stop fighting!" yelled the commandant from a distance, "We must not let them get close to the Demon's Castle's gates!". Explosions, bits of granite, electricity, and flying elf soldiers filled the skies. The fire Djinn, using his flame breath, blew his ember air and burned any foe that dared get near him. The round headed Djinn used his meditative psychokinesis on the forces of nature to create his power balls. After acquiring a couple, he launched them at the elf troops, which exploded upon contact. The cloth Djinn used his icy breath to freeze the floor and make the enemies slip onto their backs. "They must be stopped no matter what the cost!" continued to scream the commandant as he stood away from the battles. More and more soldiers ran up to our heroes in droves. Nuttingham, grabbing his bushy tail, coiled into a ball and rolled forward up a small ramp like rock structure, knocking down enemies in his way. The sorcerer boy was now at low ground, targeting his opponents one by one and shocking them with electricity. The sharpshooter, with a big smile on his face, kept on shooting at the massive legion as they fell down to the floor. "Do you understand me!?" shouted the commandant, perfectly safe at his position near the entrance. "Stop them! Or else you will see the anger of the Overlord." Our 3 heroes had past the small gate welcoming those who dare to enter the Demon's Castle that stood outside the entrance. The fighting continued as black shell beetles carrying more troops entered the fray. The boy dodged the airborne beetles, the sharpshooter dashed across the gang of disorderly troops. Nuttingham knocked down all opposition against him. The commandant continued to scream demands from the sidelines. "DO NOT FAIL ME OR THE OVERLORD WILL -AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!". An explosion interrupted his speech as an arrow flew into his chest. The commandant fell down the moat in between the gate and the Demon's Castle entrance. The troops continued to fight in the frenzy but no matter how many they were, our heroes knocked them down, blew them up, zapped them away, and froze them in place. The troops would not stop however. They were too hot blooded and excited to stop. One by one the troops slowed in numbers, until eventually few remained. The beetles stopped coming and the remaining troops were smashed down. The commandant's troops were now defeated.
Catching their breaths, and as the Djinn returned to the lamp for rest, our heroes remained in a guarded position. Well at least 2 of them.
Nuttingham wondered "Nobody's here. Why?"

"Don't drop your guard." said the Sharpshooter, "Reinforcements may come out of nowhere."
Suddenly Nuttingham's eyes were wide open. A huge smile was struck on his face. "Look guys." he expressed happily, "We're here! We're finally at the entrance of the Evil Overlord's castle." In front of them, there it stood. The front gates to the Demon's Castle, the home of the Overlord. However, standing below this gate was a giant moat that was very deep. Crossing it is not possible without some kind of bridge.
"It's the entrance alright" said the boy, "but how are we suppose to go through it if it's closed?" As everyone started to ponder as to how to gain access, a giant creaking noise suddenly was heard. It was the drawbridge that was being lowered!
"Hey!" reacted the sharpshooter, "It's opening!" This was a surprise to everyone but doubts were in the air. However, they pressed on. They got on the draw bridge and started walking but only walked halfway. They stopped and looked around for anything suspicious, however it was all calm.
"There's nobody guarding." said Nuttingham, "This is getting weird."
As soon as he finished, a very booming laugh was heard. The sharpshooter was so startled that he shoved his pistol into Nuttingham's tummy. "AH!" Nuttingham screamed.
"Oh! Sorry." apologized the sharpshooter and lowered his weapon.
"Congratulations!" the booming voice returned. "You are the first mortals in a million years to arrive at this castle alive."
"Stop hiding!" demanded Nuttingham. "Come out and show us your face, Alcazar!"
As if his request was granted, a strange figure started forming above them. The sharpshooter got his pistol ready as did the boy with is broom. Nuttingham just looked on as the figure continued to form. Small particles were floating around, hovering above but in a specific pattern. It was hard to make the pattern out as they were apart but as they joined together, the figure started to build character. At last the very few seconds left before the figure fully materialized, the figure shown a face with a iron mask on that covered all but his eyes, nose, mouth, and cheeks. No hair was found so his top was covered by two plates that was part of the mask from the back. Due to no ears existing, the entire head was a perfectly round body except for the eyes, mouth, and nose, which were humanoid. This was Alcazar.
"Satisfied?" he said. "I want to be the first to congratulate you on your successful journey."
"ALCAZAR!" screamed Nuttingham.
"But you do realize that this is where the journey ends, right?"
The sharpshooter answered, "Quit humoring us. Aren't you going to send the guards to come after us?"
"Oh no," continued Alcazar, "I'm not sending anyone out to get you. If anything, the Overlord is welcoming you inside."
"Really?" answered Nuttingham, "Does that mean you are going to lead us to him?"
"No but you are welcomed to enter his domain. All you have to do is knock on his door."
"Did you hear that guys? He's practically surrendering. We've won!"
The sharpshooter looked with disbelief as he replies "Oh come on. You don't buy that, do you?"
"You truly are a simpleton Nuttingham." spoke Alcazar.
"HEY!" replied back Nuttingham, "That's a mean thing to say."
"Within this castle, a hundred soldiers are waiting to shred you to pieces."
"You said you weren't going to send anyone to get us."
"I am not. They are waiting for you inside. The minute you enter, it's an all out war."
"Ah nuts." Nuttingham looks at the floor as he kicks up some dust. "I thought it was all over."
The sharpshooter takes this opportunity and asks Alcazar "What about you? Are you going to attack us?"
"In time" replies Alcazar, "but I will watch for now and see how you perform."
"OW!" shouted Nuttingham as a boulder hits him on top of his head. This causes him to fall. "HEY MAN!" he yells at Alcazar, "What's the big idea?"
"GET UP!" demands Alcazar.
"Huh?" Nuttingham said confusingly.
"NUTTINGHAM! GET UP!" Nuttingham has no idea what just happened but apparently he obeys and gets up to his feet. "Alright, I'm up." Another boulder suddenly hits Nuttingham's head once more, making him fall down yet again. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" screamed Nuttingham.

"GET UP ALREADY!" Alcazar shouted.
"WHY DO YOU KEEP HITTING ME WITH A BOULDER!?"
"NUTTINGHAM, GET UP!" Just then, another boulder appeared on top of Nuttingham but this time it hung there, ready to fall on top of the confused squirrel. "Okay, okay, just don't throw that boulder at me." Nuttingham pleaded, even though he had no idea what Alcazar wanted. "Hey, hey, come on man..."
"NUTTINGHAM, GET UP!" The boulder started to drop. Nuttingham covered his face, ready to accept the impact. "GET UP NUTTINGHAM!"

Nuttingham fell off the sacks of grain on onto the wooden floor as a sack of grain landed on his face. He quickly shoved the bag of grain away from him, spilling it across the floor.
"Nuttingham, get up already. It's high noon." screamed his angry sister.
"Huh? Wha...?" Nuttingham was dazed and confused. However after a few seconds, he finally realized that his sister had once again woken him up from his favorite dream.

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Chapter 4: Prologue 4

It was a bright and shining day, but Nuttingham wouldn't want anything to do with it. He was happy simply sleeping all day long because it was the only time he could adventure. Nuttingham the Squirrel, a young, wild, and highly imaginative squirrel who stood 2 feet tall and was 14 years old. He had red fur with some white fur along his snout, hands, tummy, and back of his tail. He wore a cap made out of straw and twigs woven together along with his shoes. His vest was nothing more than a piece of yellow burlap that had holes ripped on it. Because the community was quite small, he had yet a home of his own, so the village chief gave him the granary to sleep in where he used the sacks of grain as his bed. He's been sleeping in the granary for his entire life and yet they still have not even begun planning where to build his home. Not that Nuttingham cared because the granary was just fine for him, even though it was a big empty room with one window and nothing but bags of nuts and grain for the winter. But to him it was not uncomfortable because he had his big bushy tail that was as big as he was that he used as a pillow and blanket all the same. So comfortable that he had trouble waking up for his chores. His sister, on a daily basis, would have to wake him up by means of smacking him, and today was no exception. His sister, Dawn, was a raccoon. A light brown raccoon with dark purple stripes that looked black unless you got in real close. Nothing unusual from any other raccoon. Well, except for the white hands, which was unique to Dawn.

"Ah sis," said Nuttingham, grudgingly, "why did you wake me up now? I was having that dream again where I'm a great hero."

Dawn replied, "You can have dreams when it's night time. Daytime means chores."

"Ah sis..."

"We need you to get more apples, so get to it."

"Right now? Can't it wait till later?"

"No. Now get to it."

Nuttingham wasn't too happy about being woken up from his favorite dream where he becomes a great hero, exploring the world with new found friends, fighting evil from sinister enemies. You see, Nuttingham has a desire to adventure. He wishes to see the world outside of his village and explore. However, the village chief has forbidden him from leaving the area, much to the distress of Nuttingham.

Having no choice but to listen to his sister, Nuttingham climbs up the stairs of the granary entrance into the grass of the outside. "Ah, such a nice day." says Nuttingham, "I should finish my chores fast so I can play in the forest." The small unnamed village of an unknown area. The residents of this village have been living here for centuries, never learning anything about the outside world. There is no record of anyone leaving the village into the outer forest. Perhaps because the populace of this village do not know the concept of reading or writing. They know only of what they have learned since days of old. The village is quite small, around 2 miles in, literally, a straight line. This strip is quite small compared to a large city, but to the villagers, it is enough for there are roughly 70 raccoons living in this vicinity. They live in small huts made out of straw and leaves. They are small enough to only house at least 2 adult raccoons and at least 2 raccoon children with fencing to separate properties. To be specific about the area, only the first mile is habitable. They do not exit into the forest on the east side, where the world awaits, but have secluded the second mile, which is a piece of forest where they get their food. Unlike the mile long housing that is their homes, the harvested forest is more wide open. It is still enclosed in fencing so getting lost is not possible. This forested area is wild indeed but, at the same time, still tamed to provide necessities such as food and water, as well as keep away the wild monsters. At the end of the forest, there is a cliff where the forest ends. Truly this is a peaceful village one could simply relax and let the days go by without worry. Nuttingham, however, did not want any of that. The very eager squirrel wanted to venture. He wanted excitement. He wanted to learn new things. The only way he got these were in the campfire events where the villagers would gather around and tell tall tales and legends of old. Other than that, there was nothing to do for the young squirrel that would appease his desire to adventure. That is why his only escape was the secluded forest. As much as he could, he would spend his hours playing in the forest, pretending to be a great hero, exploring his own little world that he has created, and going on his own adventures. But that was for later because now he had to do chores as his sister instructed. His first order

of the day was to pick fruit from the trees. He headed towards the forest, greeting his fellow raccoon folk, whom all apparently looked the same. At least to the untrained eye they would but Nuttingham knew everyone of them by name.
"Hey Spirits."
"Hello Nuttingham. Finally up I see."
"Yeah. If only I didn't have a sister, I would still be in the sack."
Nuttingham continues on, walking to the forest, which was a 4 minute walk from the granary he slept in.
"Run, how's it going?"
"Leave me alone, Nuttingham."
"Always cheerful I see."
By this time, everyone was up, working on their assigned task. The day, as his sister said, was for chores. All day, they would work until sunset, when they were allowed to stop for the remainder of the day, relax, and have fun. This included Nuttingham but he didn't always follow this rule.
"Hello, Nuttingham."
"Hey there, Moon."
"Gonna go pick some oranges today?"
"Yup. Apples as well."
Nuttingham was close to the secluded forest when he spotted a fellow female raccoon who was trying to get water from a water pump.
"Good morning, Sunlight."
"Hi Nuttingham. Can you help me with this water pump? It's stuck again."
Nuttingham happily accepted. "Sure thing." he answered and started to fiddle with the pump. His sister had appeared behind the two as she witnessed Nuttingham trying to fix the pump by himself.
"Nuttingham," she said, "what are you doing?"
"Hey sis. I'm helping Sunshine to get this water pump to work."
"Oh no. Nuttingham, every time you try to fix the water pump, you end up breaking it and we end up having to call Forest Fire to fix it."
"Well I won't let it happen this time." Nuttingham grabbed on the handle firmly and pulled it down with all his weight but he did not realize this as he was not paying attention. SNAP! The handle, along with Nuttingham, fell down into the grass. His sister looked on with angry eyes as she crossed her hands knowing full well this was going to happen. All Nuttingham could answer was "Someone call Forest Fire."

Not too long, a raccoon, this one having grayish and faded brown fur, suddenly came. "Hi guys." he said, "Broke the handle again, ey Nuttingham?"
"Oh, knock it off." scoffed Nuttingham.
"You be quiet, Nuttingham." scolded his sister. "I keep telling you not to attempt to fix the water pump by yourself."
"I was just trying to help."
"Well because of that, you have to go and chop wood after you pick fruit."
"WHAT? Oh come on sis. You gotta be kidding. Why do I gotta do that?"
"Because Forest Fire is the one in charge of getting us firewood, but now he's gotta fix the water pump. Now hurry up with the fruit, because you are going to be chopping a lot of wood."
"Oh brother. I can't believe this!" Nuttingham could say no more. Forest Fire was in charge of chopping wood, a very tiring job. However, he was now busy fixing the only water pump in the area. It was either fix the pump or carry buckets of water from the stream in the secluded forest, and no one liked having to carry buckets of heavy water for hours on end. So Nuttingham, angrily, marched on to the forest to continue his chores.
"I can't believe I got to chop wood as well." Nuttingham said as he now entered the forest. "This sucks. Ugh. I guess I better get started on the fruit picking." Just as he finished saying this, something fell down from the tree quickly. "BOOOOO!" it yelled. Nuttingham screamed as he was knocked back onto his tail on the floor. However, it was only a boy raccoon.

"HA HA HA," said the boy, "I can't believe you keep getting scared so easily."
"LUCKY!" yelled Nuttingham. "You gotta stop doing that!"
Lucky was a small male child raccoon. He was the only one that understood Nuttingham's desire for adventure (or at least to Nuttingham's knowledge). He and Nuttingham would pretend to go on adventures in the forest and play for hours on end. Lucky was truly the only one Nuttingham could confine in with his wishes of excitement.
"Chill out Nuttingham. I'm just kidding."
"Well you do it so often, I guess I should be used to it."
"Come on Nuttingham. Let's play."
"I can't. I got to do chores."
"Again?"
"Yes again. I do them everyday and today, I gotta chop wood as well." Then an idea came to Nuttingham.
"Hey Lucky, help me out with my chores. That way, I'll be done faster."
"Chores? Those are boring." Figuring that Nuttingham was not going to play with him, Lucky started to head back to the village. "I'm going to go home and get something to eat."
Suddenly a female raccoon was heard from the distance. "Lucky," it was Lucky's mother. "can you come here please? We need you to mix the compost heap." Lucky's eyes widened at the thought of doing such a unpleasant job. He turned around quickly and started walking into the forest again, shoving Nuttingham forward. "Uhh...I can't mom!" he yelled back, "I'm helping Nuttingham pick apples!" Now he directed his attention to Nuttingham. "Come on, come on, let's go before she finds me."
"Hey, " said Nuttingham, "quit shoving." And thus Nuttingham's chores began. The duo set out into the middle of the forest where the fruit groves were. There were not many as the forest was a mile long and most of the surrounding area were wild trees not cultivated. Those trees were used for their leaves and maybe bug hunting but the domesticated trees were used for firewood and harvesting fruit and nuts were all in this small area. Nuttingham was tasked with climbing the trees, as he was the best climber, while Lucky had to catch and put them into a pile.
"Are you sure you don't want to be the one to get the apples?" asked Nuttingham, who wanted to give Lucky a chance at the task as he was worried Lucky could not do his part.
"I'm telling you, it's okay." answered Lucky, who was fine with his position.
"These apples are kinda big. You may not be able to get them."
"I'm telling you it's alright. How big can an apple be?"
Nuttingham just said okay and left him to his job. "Here comes the first one." Nuttingham grasped the apple and threw it into the ground. Lucky saw the apple but suddenly got wide eyed as the apple smashed itself against Lucky's face. The apple turned out to be as big as Lucky's entire body. These were the normal size apples in this orchard. Nuttingham dropped from the tree unto the ground. "You okay?" he asked a dizzy Lucky.

The day went on as the two young boys collected apples. Nuttingham knew there was still much to do but Lucky was already fed up.
"Are we done yet?" he asked.
"No. We still need to get oranges."
"This is tiring work."
"For who? I'm the one climbing the trees and dropping the apples."
"Yeah, but I'm the one whose gotta drag the apples and pile them."
"What's so hard about that? Besides, you don't even have to drag them. You can just roll them on the ground."
"In this tall grass?"
As they were walking and talking, they came across the hole. In the middle of the secluded forest, there lies a hole, not too big, around 19 inches in diameter. It just lies there in front of two trees with nothing bothering it besides bugs. Nuttingham and Lucky had always been curious about the hole.
"Hey," said Lucky, "have you ever wondered if there was anything down there."
"Yeah." answered Nuttingham. "I've been meaning to explore this hole eventually. Come on, let's keep

going."
Leaving the hole behind for another time, they continued with their jobs but the two kept on with their conversation. Lucky continued from where he last left off. "So have you decided when you are going to go on an adventure?"
"Yeah, whenever I get the chance."
"So are you going to go on an adventure now?
"I wish. The elder won't let me go. He keeps saying it's too dangerous for me to go on a journey alone."
"Why?"
"Because of monsters." Nuttingham targets a tree and proceeds to climb it to get oranges. He continued. "He says there are monsters everywhere outside the village and that I would not survive alone."
"But didn't you fight off that giant spider that attacked our village a year ago?"
"Yeah, but he still doesn't want me to go. So I'm stuck in this village, probably for the rest of my life."
Nuttingham grabbed the last orange he could and plopped it down on the floor. "Okay, that should be enough oranges." Nuttingham dropped from the tree into the floor and started running off. "Stack them up for me, Lucky."
"Wait, where are you going?"
Nuttingham ran forward. He was heading off into his secret spot. It was a part of the cliff, only this part was behind some thick tree linings, making it hard to find. The majority of the cliff was covered with trees, making it hard to make out anything beyond them. However, in the secret spot, you would end up in a very small ledge that was around 2 and a half yards devoid of trees blocking the view. A rock sat underneath a dead tree that had holes on it's trunk, as if to make a face consisting of two round holes for eyes and a jagged broken section for a mouth, however Nuttingham does not see this for it might frighten him if he did. It was his little secret spot. Well except for the fact that Lucky knew of it as well.
"So," caught up Lucky, "you were heading towards your secret spot."
"Yeah. I like it here. It's the only place in this village that lets me see a piece of the world."
"What do you mean?"
"Well our village is covered with trees. But here, you can see the big water. You can also see the purple mountains." The big water Nuttingham was referring to was an ocean. High on the cliff, he had a clear view of an endless ocean that stretched from the west and on the east were, what Nuttingham dubbed, the purple mountains. The purple mountains consisted of hills that were purple in color due to unknown circumstances. Circumstances that Nuttingham wanted so desperate to find out. Behind these hills were actual mountains. There were two rows with small mountains behind the purple hills and even bigger mountains behind the smaller ones. These bigger mountains had snow covering the top and clouds that were floating behind them. Ever since he has discovered this secret location, he has looked upon this beautiful picture and pondered for hours on end on what adventures he could have. At first it was a wonder but now he has accepted that this was the natural state of this scenery, even if he did not understand why the hills were purple, why the bigger of the mountains were covered in white, or even what the white covering was. It was all so foreign to him, and that excited his desires even more.
"I always come here just to wonder what is on those mountains. To think it's just right there in front of me but I can't even reach my hand to touch them, let alone go over there."
"You sure are a dreamer, Nuttingham."
"Someday, someday for sure, I'll be able to go to those mountains, and then go beyond them and see the world." Nuttingham's daydream would have to end however because there was much to be done. "Come on. We gotta chop wood now."
"We?"
"Yeah. You agreed to help me, remember?"
"Pick fruit, but not chop wood."
"Well would you rather go mix compost?"
The two rascals ran off, back to the forest, leaving the secret place alone once more. In the endless skies from this area, Nuttingham only looked at the mountains, calling him to come to them. However, little did he know that the skies were also beckoning him, for at this spot, at the dark hours of the night, there was a specific star

that was visible then. In this star, adventures were already happening.

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Chapter 5: Prologue 5

In the wide open space of the cosmos, many worlds are present. Each world having it's own unique civilization and features. Many of these worlds are primitive, just now starting their development, while others have advance to create culture and progress. However, few of these worlds have met each other for not many have advanced in star travel. Though one is the exception. The planet Ashtar. From afar, it is a green planet with blue oceans being overlooked by many moons, clouds and twinkling stars. It is a world covered in a painting like that of a woodcut from a fairy tale. The planet is a civilized world full of elves, fairies, goblins, and other such creatures. As said before, the technology of this planet is not by far the most advance in the cosmos but star traveling is possible thanks to the advance of technology of this planet. The ability to fly in the sea of stars was not by the planets convention however. It was from a foreign power that is unknown to those outside of the Demon's Tower. All the people know about the new technology that has suddenly arrived in this planet is that the evil demon King Geo has won the war between good and evil and ever since the Era of Darkness, technology has progressed at a fast rate. The aforementioned star traveling is thanks to the star cruisers, ships designed to travel the sea of stars.

In the middle of the Green Deck mountains lies a tower. This is the Demon's Tower, a large building, green in color, with a massive stairway to the entrance with pillars at each side that end in a barb ball on top. The tower itself is tall with a curvy figure, many dormers adorn the sides, the tiles that make up the walls are shaped like lizard scales, green flags lie still in the windless night on top of the tower but not standing straight but jotting outwards, and a frightening face is carved in the middle of the tower with two red eyes, an open mouth like a parrots beak but with teeth around it. On the very top of the tower is a court room with large arcade arches and large pillars supporting the dome ceiling. This is where the evil King Geo lies.

Before the court therein lies a bridge. It is made of red bricks on its side and granite on the top. There are also pillars that support the walkway as well made out of gold that is now tarnished orange with a decorative owl on top of them and small precious stones line up between the owls and the granite. In this bridge a general is walking on it on his way towards the evil King. It is General Blade Laru. A lizard like creature with black skin but the only part of his body that showcases this is his head for his entire body is covered in golden armor, making it look like his face is that of a shadow and with his big mouth full of sharp teeth that opens widely when he screams, it makes a frightening and intimidating scene. His helmet covers his head sans the face and protrudes up in a pointy manner. The back of his helm has a decorative tail. He also bares a rounded chest plate that serves as his plackart and in the middle it is adorned with a jewel. His armor also includes shoulder pads, gauntlets that cover all but his 3 massive talons, and sabatons that also showcase his talons (two in front, one behind). The only piece that was not armor was his leggins, which were purple and made out of leather. He has a sword which, though he has a scabbard, never sheaths it and holds on to it always. Very rarely does he let it out of his sight.

The General walks on the bridge leading to the corridor that will lead to the court room but two elf soldiers stand in front of the large entrance. The elf soldiers are the main force of the elf army. They are hideous to look at with bony cheeks, wide and slender eyes, pointy ears, long noses, and the overall head looks too small to acquire the facial features. The uniform consist of an orange cap, tunic, outer sock, green shirt, gloves, and pointy shoes. Each soldier is issued a knife to use for combat.

General Blade approached the two guards and in his raspy voice he said "Out of the way. I'm here to see the master."

"Give us the password."

"Password? It's me, General Blade Laru. Let me through!"

"Our orders are not to let anyone in without a password. Not even you Generals can by pass this rule, so sayeth King Geo."

"Alright, alright. Let me think." General Blade had no idea what the password was, nor did he knew that he needed one. Could it have been a new order issued or has it always been in place? He either would forget things or would not bother listening. He thought of what it could be but he could not think of anything. He squinted his eyes hard, concentrating on what could the password be. Suddenly, "I DON'T REMEMBER THE

PASSWORD!" he screamed. "JUST LET ME IN ALREADY!"
"We got strict orders not to let anyone in without the password, sir."
Disgruntled, General Blade once again tried to think of what the password could be. Just then, "AHA!" he exclaimed, "I know the password." He suddenly grabbed the right most soldier by the neck with his talons and jutted his knife near the soldiers belly. "LET ME IN OR I'M GOING TO GUT YOU LIKE A FISH!" demanded General Blade.
"O...okay, OKAY! You can pass! You can pass!"
"WHAT!? After all that talk about strict orders, you're just gonna let someone in after a threat? What kind of guard are you!?"
As the guard struggled and General Blade shouted, from behind the gates, General Flame Laru interrupted.
"Blade, what are you doing? King Geo is waiting." General Flame Laru, another lizard general like his counterpart. He looked exactly the same as General Blade except that he wore green leggins and did not carry a weapon, for he had his fire breath. How he and Blade were related was not known.
"This stupid guard is challenging my authority." General Blade said. "He won't let me in."
"Did you forget the password?" said General Flame.
"Yeah, but I'm higher rank. He should let me in anyways."
"The password is to keep intruders out you fool."
"Well what's the password?"
"Little bits of chocolate."
General Blade slammed the poor guard onto the granite bridge and let go of him. "Little bits of chocolate." said General Blade.
"Pa-password correct. You...may pass." And thus the two Generals went inside to meet the evil King. The passageway leading to the court room was dark, not because of lack of light, though that too was a reason, but because it was painted black. Only the windows provided some sort of dÃ©cor. The windows were barred and there were small holes around some of the more decorative ones to form a floral design. The corridor was long. So long that it took 3 minutes to walk through it.
"So why did King Geo summon us?" General Blade asked.
"You fool," responded General Flame. "don't you know anything? It's about the card."
"You mean 'that' card?"
"Yes, that card. There has been a report that said a peddler was seen with it."
"A peddler? How'd a peddler get their hands on it?"
"I don't know but it was reported that he gave the card to the Wonder Roosters."
"The Wonder Jerks? Why'd he do that?"
"Who knows, but King Geo is worried."
"What's so good about this card?"
"King Geo said it could summon a magical chariot."
"A chariot? What's so bad about a chariot?"
"You jabberwock. The chariot is said to have magical powers. King Geo is worried that it could lead to his downfall."
"So he wants us to go and get the card?"
"What are you talking about? He already gave us that order earlier."
"He did?"
"You mean you didn't know? Where were you when he issued the order?"
"Well, when did he issue the order?"
"You jabberwock! You better hope he doesn't know that you have not sent your troops to search for the card."
"What? You think he'll turn me into a wood statue?"
"Of course!"
"Then I better go and tell my men to-"
"You idiot. It's too late. King Geo has summoned us already. Just hope he doesn't know about it."
"Well what did he summon us for if it wasn't to issue a search?"
"I don't know, but it must be important."

"Suppose someone has already found the card."
"Possibly, but I doubt it. After all, this is the Wonder Roosters we are talking about. They are not easy to catch. Whatever the case, his majesty is waiting for us. Let's just go and find out what it is."
"You know, I could go for little bits of chocolate right about now."
General Flame rolled his eyes at that statement. By this time, they have finally reached the entrance to the court room with another pair of guards standing in front of it.
"Hello lowly guard." said Blade, "We're here to see King Geo."
"What is the password?"
"Little bits of chocolate."
"That is not the password."
"WHAT DO YOU MEAN-"
Flame interrupted Blade's screaming. "There's a different password for the court room."
"Are you kidding!? How many passwords are there?"
"You should know. You have to know this stuff."
"I'm too old to learn anything new."
Flame turned around to the guard. "The password is One Billion Words."
"Password correct. You may pass." The guards opened the doors to the court room and the Generals walked inside but stopped at the first step of the 3 tiered stairway that was in place.
"Alright," said Flame, "the King is up ahead. Let's walk up to him and bow our-"
Suddenly a voice echoed through the court yard. "You may reside where you be at the instant." It said.
"Ki...King Geo!" said Flame surprisingly as he bowed down quickly, "I...I did not know you could see us from there. I apologize for my rudeness." He then stared at Blade, who was just standing there. "Blade, you fool, what are you doing? Bow down will you!?"
The evil King Geo, the one who now rules all of Ashtar. He is the King of Demons who won the battle between Good and Evil. He had a peculiar look to him: he was a globe. As if he was a world of himself, he took the appearance of a planet with oceans and lands. One his backside there was an mountain island with a ring of clouds around it. His eyes, nose, and mouth were also parts of this "world". His eyes were round but he squinted, leaving very little of his iris to see. His nose, though still being land, took form of that of a man's natural nose. His mouth too was land but he had mountains underneath to give illusion of a goatee. His arms, however, were those of clouds but they could clasp items just as much as flesh ones could. There was also 2 small clouds hovering both above and beneath him. He was a strange looking demon indeed.
"General Flame Laru, General Blade Laru," said the King, "I am complacent you could come forth when I beckoned for you."
"Yes, your majesty." said Flame, "On your command, I will swim the largest oceans, climb the highest mountain..."
"Yes, yes, I comprehend."
"King Geo." said Blade.
"What be it, General Blade?" asked the King.
"If this is about the Card, why did you summon us instead of Moeban?"
"For the motive that I encompass a compulsion of you two that necessitate field work."
"Oh, I see...I think. Well we are at your service. What do you wish from us then?"
"Very well, you may draw near me."
The two generals obeyed and started walking in the court room. The room was pretty large. Nearly a quarter of a mile in length. From the entrance to the throne was a narrow path that was a bridge, for the entire court was suspended in the air from the structure. The edge of the bridge had red pillars with a decorative spiral on the bottom and top that reached the dome ceiling that was blue and decorated with golden stars all around in a circle pattern. The outer edge of the court room had green pillars however and overlooked the Green Deck Mountains and the associate lands for this was the very top of the Demon's Tower. The throne in which the King sat was that of a globe's stand with decorative symbols of the Ashtarian alphabet with two arm rest at the side and two supports at the bottom with one in the middle and one in a slant formation in front.
The two generals arrived in front of the throne and bowed down in the expected manner: hunched over with

one arm extended behind, bent at an angle and the other across the chest, the head looking upwards. It was a strange stance but it was the King's orders. "How can we serve you, oh humble King of mine?" said Flame.
"Arise." responded the King, "I shall tell you. First off, did you dispatch your soldiers to hunt for the Card of the Sun?"
"Yes, your majesty. We have received word that the Wonder Roosters possess it."
"Where are the Wonder Roosters?"
"The Wonder Roosters are at their hideout. Our men are ready to ambush them when they leave."
"Tremendous. All is going well."
"Nothing is too good for you, your majesty."
"General Flame Laru, General Blade Laru, I desire you two to be the ones that summon the Sun Chariot."
Flame's eyes suddenly widened with shock. "What? You want us to summon the Chariot? But your majesty, isn't it risky to summon the chariot in your presence?"
"Not if I siphon the chariots power."
Blade asked "What does that mean?"
Flame answered "It means he's going to try to suck the power out of it."
"Correct." said the king. "If I amass all the power of the Sun Chariot, it will be ineffectual."
"But your majesty," said Flame, "you could die from doing that. Why risk it?"
"I want to endow the Sun Chariot to our Suzerain."
"What? You want to give the Overlord the only thing that can defeat him as a gift?"
"If I expunge all of the Chariot's power, then it will be hollow and I can furnish it to Suzerain Lar as my offering."
Blade commented "Well that sounds nice."
"Wait a minute," said Flame, "Wouldn't Overlord Lar think that you are betraying him by siphoning the power of the Chariot?
"No," said the King, "for the reason that the power of the Chariot is also toxic to me. I will just siphon its power but not maintain it."
At this instance, a black shelled beetle arrived and the buzzing echoed throughout the court. "What's that?" asked Blade. Then he said "Wait...it's a beetle. Don't worry your majesty, I'll kill it."
"This be my communicator." said the King. "I utilize it accordingly so I may correspond with my minions who are afar." The beetle stopped in front of the King. The black shelled beetles were one of the creatures introduced into the world of Asthar to keep the people of the planet at bay. The worst part is that King Geo and his minions have control over them. They are placed in hives all around so that if anyone opposes the King, they will let them out and cause misery to all. The beetles are rounded in shape but not too rounded. They are shaped almost like a football but without the pointed ends. The top was a smooth black shell, hence their name, while the bottom is striped and white. They have two orange wings at each side and one eye in the middle on the front. Some have two large legs that can walk and hop while others do not. This particular beetle was modified with broadcast vision, just one of many technological advances that the evil King introduced. The beetle opened its eye and like a projector, a small, round hologram appeared before him. It was a commandant who was reporting back to the King.
"Your majesty," the commandant said, "It is I, Commandant Ralloy." The audio was kinda fuzzy and crackled a lot as the vision was all grainy and the opacity of the hologram kept raising and falling at random intervals. The technology, while it did work, was far from perfected.
"What do you encompass to me, Commandant?"
"The Wonder Roosters have left their hideout. They are surrounded."
"Tremendous. The Wonder Roosters have nowhere to scurry. All is falling into my hands."
Blade let out a sigh of relief and thought to himself "Phew, now I don't have to worry about him finding out I did not send out my troops."
"Commandant," said the King, "convey to me the Wonder Roosters breathing. They shall befall as my most cherished wood statues."
"Yes, sir." replied the commandant.
"General Flame Laru, General Blade Laru, arrange yourselves. Soon, the Card of the Sun will come and you

shall convoke the Sun Chariot, which shall suit a trophy for Suzerain Lar."
"If that is your wish," said Flame, "then we shall be honored to summon the Chariot."
"Excellent. With the Wonder Roosters out of prospect, Ashtar shall belong to me. As soon as the card is in my tenure, then no entity shall stand in my way." The king spoke of this as the image of the hologram changed to the situation the commandant was now in: the Wonder Roosters being surrounded by the Commandant's army, ready to pounce at a moments notice.

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Chapter 6: Prologue 6

The Grimm Forest. A large, thick woodland where the ground is pitch black due to the light incapable of seeping through the many thick and giant branches. The trees themselves are over 10,000 years old and thick enough that the residents of this forest decided to build their homes on the top of the branches. The branches themselves are a yard thick, making it easy to walk on, and they have grass, not leaves as you may have thought, growing on top of them that droops down. At night, the surrounding shrubbery glow from the florescent flowers that flash different colors depending on what kind they were. The night and dusk skies twinkle like jewels because of the many stars above. The housing is made out of clay with canvas bolted on top. The wood is so thick that it takes too long to chop a single log, making them expensive to own.
This forest is close to the Green Deck mountains where the evil King Geo observes. Around a hundred years ago, there was a great battle where King Geo set up his forces against the Ashtarians. Asthar's spirits as well as the mortals fought bravely but in the end lost, thus began what is now known as the Era of Darkness, a time where King Geo rules everyone in the land for his own selfish needs, causing the people misery and grief. The only good thing this era brought was technological advancements but only to benefit King Geo. Along the way within the Era of Darkness, there eventually came the Golden Age of Adventurers. During these trying times, brave and bold individuals, groups, and bands would seek fame and fortune, defying King Geo and his minions, all in the name of adventure and thrills. The adventurers are the last hope of Ashtar and are now recognized for their valiant and rebellious actions against the empire. They have created such an impact that they are now culturally important. In the past 20 years, a ranking system has been in placed to record adventurers from all the lands and tier them in their place in history. The conditions of setting these rankings are administered by an official council and there are many rules in place, but the following rankings, from lowest to highest, are as follow in their basic form:
Explorer: The lowest ranking position is given to those who have venture locally but have not done so much as observe.
Fortune-hunter: The most given ranking are to those whose aim are to seek fortune but not necessarily fame and glory, meaning that the venturer will not partake in an adventure if the danger outweighs the rewards.
Opportunist: This ranking is the same as the previous but the difference for this one is the rewards does not have to equate to the danger or even be present.
Globetrotter: This ranking is given to those who travel far and wide to different foreign lands but much like the explorer, do not engage in anything aside from exploration. This ranking differs from the previous lower rankings in that the venturer travels to new lands on a constant basis, therefore it is the only ranking that can accompany another.
Pioneer: This ranking is given to those who take lead into perilous situations but do not engage in said danger for others to follow after.
Daredevil: From here forward are the least given rankings due to their difficulty to achieve. This ranking is given to those who have ventured into danger and have partaken in it in some shape or form.
Swashbuckler: This ranking is the same as the daredevil, except that this title is given to those who have no desire to reward from it. If they are rewarded, the prize would come from whatever venture they have participated and not from offers. This title mostly goes to those who have not taken rewards at all.
Adventurer: Not just a way to describe the person but the word itself has become it's own ranking. This is the most coveted title. This ranking is given to the ones who have taken many ventures in many places, with many dangers, and many rewards. Only the most experienced can take home this title.
Legend: The very rare title that is hard to attain, not many people expect to get it and aim to get the second best one. This title is given to those who have done the most impossible of ventures. The ones that no one would think anyone can survive from. The most dangerous of situations are no match for this candidate.
So far, the most common title given is the fortune-hunter because the majority of adventurers simply wish for riches beyond their wildest dreams. However, there are those who wish to do more than just get rich. There are those who truly seek excitement and suspense. These are the very thrill seekers that, at most, reach daredevil status. As for the top title of legend, there has not been a record of anyone that takes this title. Going

down to the earliest archives does not reveal any adventurer who deserves this title, for whoever gets the legendary status must do something so grand that it will shake the world, and so far that has not happened. But what about the aforementioned most wanted title of adventurer? In all recorded history since the beginning of the Golden Age of Adventurers and even the Era of Darkness, only two have earned this prestigious title: the Wonder Roosters, a pair of friends who have defied King Geo and his minions time and time again, gaining wealth and fame along the way. The people praise them as the heroes of the Era of Darkness. They are both elves about 2 feet high, big round eyes, long noses, perfectly round ears, and are around 16 years of age. Louis, the brash and adventurous of the two, dons a orange beanie on his golden hair, wears a blue vest over an orange shirt, brown pants, and black leather shoes. His weapon of choice is his arrow pistol, a crossbow in the shape of a gun that automatically loads arrows from a chamber. Another example of technological progress in Asthar. Silver, the calm and most clever of the two, wears a green headband over his orange hair with a triangle design on it. He does not wear a shirt but a yellow poncho with a green stripe on the bottom along with green pants and green sockings (a type of footwear unique to Asthar). His weapon are his knives. Custom made to be light and be able to be flung at his enemies. He has many of them he makes himself from his workshop. For the most part, he uses them as a melee weapon, even though they were designed to be a projectile. The duo have ventured into many lands but always come back to their hideout, which is disguised to look like a tavern to keep King Geo and his minions guessing on their whereabouts, and so far it has worked since they have never discovered that this tavern is the Wonder Roosters' home. That is until today.

It is the nearing of the break of dawn. The sky is purple with whatever twinkling stars about to rest to make way for the sun to appear. The Wonder Roosters, standing with their weapons at hand outside of their tavern's doorway, are now at the mercy of Commandant Ralloy who has been hunting them down for years. He has cornered them though this wouldn't be the first time. What's different however is that he has a force 4 times bigger than before along with backup. To distinguish his ranking from the rest of the soldiers, his uniform is purple instead of orange to stand out amongst the rest of his troops. The Wonder Roosters are literately surrounded on all directions.

"For the crime of challenging King Geo's authority," the Commandant explained, "you are under arrest."

"Tell us something we don't know." answered back Louis.

"Don't smart mouth with me." said the Commandant, "You have 254 charges against you."

"Is one of those laws outrunning idiot soldiers like you?" said Silver.

"SHUT UP!" yelled the Commandant, "You will not escape this time, Wonder Roosters. We have the entire elf army on you. Escape is impossible."

Louis answered back. "The entire army? This is what the people's taxes are going for? To capture two elvens?"

"SILENCE!" demanded the Commandant, "I never liked you smart aleck Wonder Roosters. But now it's time to get serious."

Silver then replied. "Just like that last hundred times you tried to capture us?"

"SHUT UUUUUUUUUUUP!" screamed the Commandant, while Louis had a smirk on his face. After capturing his breath, he continued. "Stupid fools. Why do you rebel against King Geo?"

"Here' s a better question." replied Louis. "Why do you obey Geo? He's the bad guy here."

"Because he rules Ashtar now, that's why."

"Because he won The War Between Good and Evil?"

"Exactly."

"Well it'll take a lot more than that to convince me."

"Convince? Will being turned into a wood statue convince you? Because that's what's going to happen to you."

"I don't care. I will not obey Geo, not even once."

"Idiots! Buffoons! Jabberwocks! You don't understand King Geo's power. He is the supreme ruler of this world now."

"No he isn't!" By this time, Silver lowered his guard a bit. Louis continued. "There is someone else who is even more powerful than Geo working behind the scenes."

"Who?"
"Ever heard of a entity called Lar?"
"Lar? Never heard of him."
"Lar is an Overlord taking over stars. When The War Between Good and Evil erupted, Geo asked Lar for more power. Lar granted him the power and he won the battle, which began the Era of Darkness."
Suddenly, King Geo's eyes widened a bit, though he still maintained his composure, he felt a sense of dread as he heard Louis saying this through his communicator.
"Unfeasible!" he said. "General Blade Laru, General Flame Laru, no instance to squander now. I necessitate you to go and restrain the Wonder Roosters. Confine them deceased or breathing."
Flame replied "But didn't you want them alive because-"
"It's too late for such!" interrupted King Geo. "Slay them if you must, but only whilst you encompass the Card of the Sun in your tenure."
Both Generals bowed down in the traditional sense and Flame gave his verification. "As you command, your majesty." The two generals began leaving the court room to prepare for the capture of the Wonder Roosters.
"How?" asked King Geo to himself, "How did they discover the subject matter out?"
Back at the Wonder Roosters hideout, the Commandant continued on. "Well how did you get that information?"
"Uhh...we...we can't say how we know this, but-"
"If you can't tell me where you got your information from, then I can't believe you."
Silver then spoke up. "But the fact remains, Geo is evil."
"And I thought I told you that doesn't matter." answered back the Commandant. "Those who defy King Geo get turned into wood statues. We have no choice."
"So that's why you are loyal?" continued Silver. "Because of fear? We wouldn't have to fear him if we just work together."
"Work together?"
Louis then spoke. "Yes. The entire Elf Army in Ashtar is made up of over a million soldiers, maybe even more. Geo only has a few henchmen and monsters. It's the entire Elf army that makes up the majority of his military power. We can defeat Geo if we just work together and attack him. His only limited by the power Lar has bestowed upon him."
"YOU STUPID FOOLS! Geo can turn a million people into wood statues by simply passing over them!"
"WHAT!? Are you serious!?"
"I saw it with my own eyes. He transforms anyone to wood statues by simply waving his hand. He's unstoppable. That's why I keep telling you guys to quit this charade and join us."
"I don't care what powers he has. We will not yield to him. Not one bit."
"Use common sense boy. If a million soldiers can be turned to wood with one wave of his hand-"
"Sir!" A soldier interrupted the Commandant.
"What!?"
"You are aware that King Geo is watching us, right?" Everyone looked up. The black shelled beetle hovering above them that has been floating on the same spot all this time. It was the communicator that King Geo was using to observe the situation from his court room.
"I COMPLETELY FORGOT!" screamed the Commandant. "CAPTURE THEM NOW!" Suddenly, every elf soldier present took out their knives, ready to pounce. Some elf soldiers suddenly appeared from the top of the tavern's rooftop, ready to capture them. It looks like the Wonder Roosters have no where to run. The Commandant gave the signal and everyone started running towards the twosome. The duo watched as the giant crowd of soldiers were ready to snatch them.
"Escape plan?" asked Silver.
"Escape plan." answered Louis. The duo suddenly jumped off the branch that they were standing on into the darkness below. "WHAT ARE YOU-" screamed the Commandant, but it was too late. The duo disappeared into the depths of the bottom of the Grimm Forest. "NOOOOOO!" yelled the Commandant as he hopelessly watched as the entire elf army landed on the now empty spot, struggling to grasp at the duo that were not there anymore.

The Wonder Roosters escape route was a set of logs that were tied up with long vines from the top of the branch. It was too dark to see from above where the Commandant was but thanks to the florescent flowers that glowed, the Wonder Roosters could see where the logs where placed. Their escape route consisted of the logs which were guided by the glowing flowers to a ladder that lead upwards into another house. This was all unbeknownst to the Commandant, who was now desperate.

"King Geo specifically asked to bring them alive. Quickly, get down and find them." His troops started to climb down the big trunk that was supporting the tavern along with another housing, trying to figure out what happened to the Wonder Roosters. A few yards away from them, there was a small hut that was right underneath the branch that the Commandant and his troops were standing. From the small opening came out the Wonder Roosters. Slowly and quietly they checked the area to see if it was clear. It was. Louis started climbing upwards and when he reached the top, held out his hand to help Silver. "THERE THEY ARE!" screamed one of the Commandant's soldiers. The duo have been caught!

"An escape plan?" said the Commandant, "I knew they wouldn't resort to suicide. QUICKLY! GET THEM!" The entire force was now on the Wonder Roosters' tail, whom were now on the run.

"Louis," said Silver, "do you think that guy was telling the truth?"

"About what?" asked Louis.

"About the entire army coming after us?" The Duo instantly put on the brakes because in front of them was a horde of soldiers.

"You said something about a million soldiers, right?" asked Silver.

A soldier who was the leader of this pack then yelled out an order. "We got them surrounded. Let's rush them!" They started walking towards the duo, with knives at hand.

"Super bomb?" asked Silver.

"Super bomb." answered Louis. From their pockets, they took a small pink orb. It swirled and crackled a lot. This was a super bomb, a very potent weapon. It is made of magic and if used with a weapon, it will quadruple the weapons arsenal for a few minutes.

"What is that?" said the troops in unison, unknown at what the super bomb was. Louis inserted the super bomb into this pistol while Silver spread it against his knives. Louis pulled the trigger while Silver launched the first knife. BOOM! The super bomb's effect was so great, everyone started flying in all directions with explosions appearing everywhere. Pink puffs of smoke filled the air and soldiers were hurdled down into the darkness below. The pathway was open and our heroes proceeded to run forward. This was not the end however, but merely the beginning because a giant formation of soldiers followed them and more soldiers were waiting for our heroes.

The Commandant's screamed "Curse you Wonder Roosters! GET THEM QUICKLY! We outnumber them astronomically!" With the super bomb in effect, the Wonder Roosters' arsenal was equivalent to an armies. It didn't matter how many soldiers came running towards them, the super bomb's explosions blew them away. However, even with the super bomb, the Wonder Roosters were having trouble targeting all of them.

"How many super bombs do you have left?" asked Silver.

"Zero. What about you?" answered Louis.

"I got one left."

"Not nearly enough to take on an entire army of a million."

The duo kept clearing wave after wave of soldiers but they just kept on coming. From behind, from in front, even from below.

"Actually," continued Louis, "I'm not so sure if it's a million. There could be more."

"As if I needed to hear that."

The duo kept on fighting. The super bombs effect was already at the halfway point. They kept on firing their weapons, blowing away all oppositions they could, but it was obvious from the fight that the super bomb was not going to last them.

"How many arrows do you have?" asked Silver.

"Five quills. You?"

"I got 8 quills."

"Not nearly enough to take on an entire army of a million."

As our heroes kept on fighting, the Commandant kept on sending more troops from behind, as if they were on a production line. The number of soldiers reached the farthest reaches. This was truly the elf army in its entirety out to capture two mere elves. "You fools!" shouted the Commandant. "You should keep your distance while they possess the power of the super bomb. Well too late for that now. The super bomb's effect has worn off by now. Strike them!" Just as he predicted, the super bomb was no longer in effect. Our heroes have now resorted back to their standard weapons.
"This is insane!" exclaimed Silver, "If I knew we were going to fight the entire army as soon as we left the door..."
"Yeah," cut off Louis, "they sure did surprise us with this."
Once again, soldiers from in front and behind were closing in on our heroes. Louis and Silver were aback against each other with each one attacking one side.
"Why have they sent the entire army now? They've always send out that stupid Commandant with a small force."
"Yeah, I noticed as well. Geo wouldn't waste the force of the entire elf army on two elvens, even if it's for us."
As the soldiers fell one after another, a small pause appeared as the other soldiers caught up. However, our heroes didn't even move because a thought now occurred into their heads. "THE CARD OF THE SUN!" screamed both, as more soldiers finally caught up. The duo regained their composure and moved forward, taking down all soldiers in front. The area they were now in was a construction zone, with logs stacked around. The soldiers took this opportunity to climb up and try to sneak up on the Wonder Roosters.
"But we didn't tell anyone about the card." said Silver.
"Well why else would they sent the entire army after us? It's the only reason they would do so."
"Well this is just great. We barely got the card and Geo already knows about it."
"Our only option now is to hide. We can't handle all these soldiers!"
Our heroes ran and ran, fighting off soldiers that were coming in swarms. The logs made it harder to concentrate because troops kept using them to hide behind them and sneak up on the duo. However, the Wonder Roosters were cunning. They didn't receive the title of Adventurer for nothing after all. They kept their eyes and ears open and shot anything that moved. The elf soldiers were tricky but not too bright. Even though the environment was against the Wonder Roosters, they managed to pull through. They were now on a section of the construction site where the branch inclined upwards. They ran up to the top where more logs were set.
"ARGH!" complained Louis, "They just keep coming and coming."
"This outta slow them down." said Silver. He grabbed one of his knives and cut the rope that tied together the logs that were sitting next to them, and with the help of Louis, they rolled the logs down into the slope. Crash! The logs hit the soldiers who were climbing up, tripping them and making them fall off the branch. The troops scattered, running away from the logs before they became the next victim. The Wonder Roosters took this opportunity and continued on. But it wasn't long however because no sooner, more soldiers were scrambling on the mess that was made, climbing on top of one another, knives in hand, all in droves. The logs that fell were nothing more than twigs compared to the multitude of soldiers that were dispatched to capture the troublesome twosome.
The Commandant was getting impatient however as he grabbed one of the soldiers. "What are you jabberwocks doing? Why haven't they been captured yet?"
"They're...they're too..."
"NO EXCUSES!" The Commandant grabbed his knife and stabbed the soldier in the chest. "You can't afford to fail! It's life or death this time around!" The giant stream of never ending soldiers marched on. The trees and branch they were standing on were all shaking from all the commotion, as if the trees themselves were shivering in fear. Our heroes kept on running forward and lucky for them, no soldier were in front. However, there was a reason for this.
"Oh no." said Silver. "The residential area. What do we do now?" There was no time to ponder however because the mass of soldiers have once again caught up to the duo.
"No choice," said Louis, "we gotta go through." Our heroes ran towards the housing complex, running as fast as they could. They were starting to get tired, but they knew they could not rest. They ran past a local resident

who almost tripped because of their dashing.
"Hey, slow down you rascals!" the man shouted. No sooner he noticed the rumbling of the branch and trees because behind him was a storm of soldiers running in a frenzy to catch the Wonder Roosters. The man screamed as he jumped out of the way of the massive crowd. The Commandant climbed on top of a nearby house to issue orders.
"Stop fooling around and get them already!" The entire housing area was crowded by the desperate army trying to capture the Wonder Roosters and in the center of this commotion, our brave pairing where fighting back as they push through the onslaught. Many inhabitants of this neighborhood were outside as the crowd roared in. Everyone scrambled to find refuge outside of the mayhem. The Wonder Roosters however were careful not to harm any innocents. They helped out those who wanted to get out of the way while keeping the army in tact. Soldiers kept falling off the branch as they kept being shot and knifed at by our heroes who kept struggling on. They climbed up on houses to shoot from a range, they got close and personal to groups of soldiers, they forcefully pushed away any innocent civilians when enemies got too close. This was a prime example of the skills the Wonder Roosters used to claim the title of Adventurer.
"I just wasted one quill of knives." said Silver.
Louis responded as he reloaded his pistol. "So did I. If we keep going at this rate, we'll lose one quill an hour."
A single elf soldier was coming towards them, however he had with him a threesome of basilisk, large frog like creatures that breathe fire. They were two times bigger than the Wonder Roosters, almost being as big as the houses in the area. They had large eyes, what looked like bearded upper jaws, the bottom jaws down to their fat stomachs were flesh colored while the remainder of their bodies were green.
"Oh no, not these stupid frogs." said Louis.
"Kee, kee, kee", cackled the lone soldier from atop the house next to him that he climbed. "Come now my babies. Time for breakfast." The basilisk stomachs were retracted within their bodies and their cheeks were now puffed. They were ready to spew out flames from their gullets. Our heroes jumped towards the house as the basilisk spewed out their flames. The Wonder Roosters climbed up the roof and Louis shot the soldier off. However, the basilisk have already targeted the house. They once again prepared to spew their flames and the duo jumped off once more. The flames were released and engulfed the house in seconds. The house started to burn down as the basilisk left it to follow our heroes. The duo ran forward and luckily left the housing area. Now they decided to take this opportunity to unleash their arsenal. Louis turned back, with pistol at hand, and started shooting the basilisk. Silver kept going forward because 2 more basilisk were waiting. He took out his knives and started flinging them. The basilisk however would not go down easily. All arrows and knives got stuck on their bellies and as they kept on casting their arsenal, the basilisk kept taking it in but the looks on their faces suggested that they were not immune to the pain. Slowly but surely, the basilisks Louis was shooting at stopped moving and fell off the branch.
"YES! Got them!" he shouted.
Silver, with his quick hands, kept launching his knives at the pair of basilisk in front of them and much them same, they fell. "Got the other ones." he shouted back.
Louis met up with Silver afterward. "That's it! We got them!"
"Yeah!".
This victory was short lived because no sooner, 3 more basilisk appeared on the scene. "Oh come on!" said Louis.
"Come on guys," yelled the Commandant a far distance from the battle, with troops behind him. "get 'em. Get 'em already!" From the sky, the black shelled beetle that was used to communicate with the Commandant appeared before him. It opened its eye and the hologram of King Geo appeared. "Commandant." said King Geo.
"AH! It's King Geo." said the Commandant.
"It be in excess of an hour. Why have I not received declaration that you boast the Wonder Roosters?"
"A...about that. The Wonder Roosters, they are very crafty. They are-"
"I have sent the total elf militia and you have still not restrained them?"
"Well...they...they are very tricky and have secret escape routes-"
"I DON'T WISH FOR EXCUSES! I want the Card of the Sun, or I will convert you all into wood statues."

Meanwhile, our heroes have managed to defeat all but one of the basilisk as they kept pummeling it with all their arsenal. "Forget an hour," said Louis, "we'll lose a quill every 5 minutes."
"How are we suppose to hide like this?" said Silver. The basilisk was finally defeated, however there were no more adversities coming after them.
"Hey," said Louis, "we're not being attacked."
"Yeah. In fact, everyone's backing off."
"I have a bad feeling about this." As they wondered what was going on, they heard a creaking noise that was coming from above. They looked up and saw a face that was protruding from a nearby tree. The face was just dÃ©cor however because the mouth was a hinge that opened up the globe like protrusion. It also had a hand but this hand was a handle that allowed this face to open up. This was a man made beetles nest! The two heroes looked at each other with shock and fear because they knew what was coming next. The doors opened wide and in less than a second, a giant storm of beetles bolted out of the tree like a mad riot gone out of control.
"NO! NOT THIS!" screamed Louis. The duo immediately started attacking with Louis shooting the entrance and Silver slinging any that came their way.
"I thought we destroyed all the hives!" said Silver.
"King Geo must've installed new ones!" No matter how hard they tried, trying to shoot out all the beetles was impossible, so they had no choice but to run away.
"ARGH!" screamed Silver, "There are too many. I'll have to use our last super bomb."
"No!" shouted Louis, "The super bomb won't last long enough to destroy all of them."
Our heroes kept on running while enduring the bites and scratches of the thousand of beetles buzzing all around them. The entire army was not too far behind either as they kept on marching forward to capture them.
"HA HA HA!" cackled the Commandant. "Looks like the mighty Wonder Roosters will finally be defeated by measly bugs." Our heroic twosome were indeed in the mercy of the giant cloud of beetles. There were so many of them that it was hard to see forward for they blocked their view and when you live on the tops of trees and whose only foothold happens to be massive branches with no fencing to protect you from slipping, they had no choice but to stop in place.
Louis spoke up, "Looks like we got no choice! We got to use our last super bomb!" Suddenly, massive explosions started erupted right above their heads. The explosions were coming from the black beetles themselves. The duo were surrounded by the massive discharges as the beetles kept falling in droves. After a few seconds the explosions stopped and whatever beetles remained either dropped dead on the branch or fell into the darkness below followed by smoke all around.
"What happened?" asked Louis in complete bewilderment. And from the sky, a fairy was seen flying downwards. It had blue, transparent wings, a dark blue dress, and golden flowing hair.
"Usela!" said Louis. "Is that you?"
"Lou, Silver," responded the fairy named Usela, "we faerens have come to help you."
"You killed all those beetles?"
"We used every magic card we had available."
Silver spoke "But magic cards aren't that powerful. You must've used like a hundred of them to kill all those bugs."
"No price is too big for you guys." said Usela. "News of you having the Card of the Sun has spread throughout the kingdom."
Louis spoke "So the bad guys have found out. I knew it!"
"Don't worry Wonder Roosters. We faerens will help you on your quest with anything you need." She then signaled behind her. A owl suddenly appeared with a deck of cards on each of its talons. "Reach out your hands." The duo did as told and reached out and each received one deck of cards.
"What are these?" asked Silver.
"Bounce Spells!" exclaimed Louis.
In the world of Asthar, before the technological advances from the Era of Darkness, magic was more prevalent. Though not many could use magic, so to give everyone the ability to craft, there had to be a way to make them more convenient to use. One of these methods were magic cards. These cards were infused with

specialty magic and eventually there were all-purpose cards which are still the most common cards to use. The cards are green with silver lining along near the edges with a pretty design around them and a symbol in the center to indicate what kind of magic it had and in the case of all-purpose cards, a circle was used. Bounce magic cards had 3 ovals. Louis took a card and loaded it into his pistol while Silver slipped a card into his knife pack.
"Will these really defeat all the beetles, Louis?" asked Silver.
"Not all at once but they will surely help us get through."
Usela spoke "If there is anything else that you need, we'll be more than happy to help."
Louis thanked Usela as the sound of buzzing was heard from the distance. "They're coming back." said Usela as she backed away, "I must make my leave. Good luck, Wonder Roosters." and thus she fled from the scene.
With new powers on their belts, the Wonder Roosters prepared to fight again. "Now we got a fighting chance." said Louis.
"Let's do it!" followed Silver. Louis pulled the trigger and Silver flung his knife. The arrow and knife hit a single beetle and from there a spark of light shot out, as if ricocheting off the beetle, bounced towards another beetle, and from that one another spark of light appeared and it too bounced at another beetle, and another, and another until it eventually dissipated, destroying all beetles as well as others that were around that were hit by the spark.
"Fantastic!" exclaimed Silver. "With these bounce cards, we won't have to waste as much ammunition." With the bounce magic in their weapons, the beetles had no chance for every one arrow or knife that landed on a single beetle, around 500 fell down like lined dominoes being toppled one after another.
This display did not please the Commandant who was furious. "NO NO NO!" he screamed, "Where did they get that magic!?"
A soldier spoke up. "Sir, I noticed an owl that was flying by. Perhaps that was the culprit."
"Then why didn't you do something."
"You orders were to stay back until further instructions."
"And because of THAT, they've managed to get a hold of a weapon upgrade!"
"So...you wanted us to disobey your order? "
"I WANTED YOU TO DO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE FOR A CHANGE!"
"So you did wanted us to disobey your order."
"You want to shut that smart mouth of-hey, where are you going?"
The soldiers were starting to shift their position. "Sir, there's a space cruiser coming our way."
"Space cruiser? Wait, that must be one of the Generals!"
The Space Cruisers were specially designed aircrafts made for traveling in the air. Nothing like this was seen in Ashtar before the Era of Darkness. Now it is common to look up in the sky and see one soar across but only those who are a part of the elf army may fly one. There is also the star cruiser, which is like the space cruiser except this model is used to travel the sea of stars. Both of these vessels share the same design: sleek and ellipse shaped pods made out of stirjin wood (stirjin being a tree with the strongest bark out of all the trees in Asthar). The windows were round with a convex shaped glass 2 inches thick with gear like segments on its outer bottom for locking purposes. The afterburner spouted outward behind with two straps of metal to hold it together. One thruster was placed underneath for the convenience of hovering, soft landings, and easy lift offs. On its sides from the rear, two wings were in place to keep the ship balanced.
The space cruiser landed on the spot where the soldiers were standing before their relocation. The front piece slide open and within was General Blade.
"General Blade!" said the Commandant as he bowed down.
"Rise up loser." said Blade as he exited the cruiser. "I'm here for the Card of the Dawn. Where is it?"
"Sir...we...still don't have the card yet."
"So they didn't have it on them?"
"Actually sir...we still...haven't captured them yet."
"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU HAVEN'T CAPTURED THEM YET!? It's been TWO HOURS and they're still on the run? And you call yourself a commoner?"
"Well..you see.."

"Stupid fools! Don't you know what this means to me? King Geo has given me the honor of...err...off...I forgot what he gave me the honor of but I'm sure it involves money."
"Don't worry sir. They can't run forever."
"Forget it!" Blade got back inside his cruiser. "I sent out my troops for nothing. I'm going after them myself because you're all worthless. You better hope I don't get to them first or else I'm going to cut your guts up."
The space cruiser started up and launched into the air. The Commandant was completely infuriated.
"AHHH! DARN IT! STUPID WONDER ROOSTERS!" He swung his knife in anger and hit the branch as hard as he could. "Wait, what was that?" He pulled his knife out of the branch and proceeded to hit the branch again and again. Tonk! Tonk! Tonk! "AHA! I have an idea on how to sneak up on the Wonder Roosters!"
Not too far from their location, General Flame and his space cruiser was waiting for General Blade, who appeared moments later.
"I got here first." said Flame, "You owe me 5 fist full of gold coins."
"Ah nuts. Well besides that, what's this plan you have to capture the Wonder Jerks?"
"First, we're going to lure them here, in this spot."
"What's so special about this spot?"
"It's one of their escape routes. We're going to let them use this one."
"We're going to let them escape?"

With magic cards in hand, our heroes were shooting down every hive they came across.
"Got it. " said Louis as they shot down one more hive. "Let's get the next one."
"Do we even have time to destroy these hives, Louis?"
"Don't worry. The bounce magic will protect us from anyone sneaking up on us. No one will be able to get a preemptive strike." Confident, the duo set out to get the next hive but suddenly the branch began to shake. Looking downwards beneath their feet, the bark of the branch started to break apart and chip away. Then from the branch came out faces, followed by hands and knives. It was the soldiers! They climbed out from beneath the branch and surrounded the Wonder Roosters. Through the crowd of the giant mob of soldiers, out comes the Commandant, boasting victory.
"Just when you thought you could get away, I've outsmarted you again. Ha ha ha!"
"Again?" asked Louis. "When was the last time you outsmarted us?"
"Shut up! You're completely surrounded now! There is no escaping this time."
Silver spoke "I'd hate to say it but I think we're trapped."
Then not too far from where they were, "Stupid Commandant!" shouted Flame, "He just ruined my plan!"
Blade then spoke "Well there as good as capture, right?"
"I guess. I don't even think the Wonder Roosters can escape this."
Back at the heroic duo, "How'd you get your guards to sneak up on us like that?" asked Louis.
"I may not look it but I'm a very observant person. I have noticed that these branches are hollow on the inside."
"So you told them to dig in and use them as tunnels? You do know that these branches are as hard as iron right? How'd you manage to dig in."
"We used the basilisk to burn a hole into the branches. No matter how strong the wood is, fire will eventually burn through it. Then to dig out, my troops used their knives. They are all jagged and probably useless now, but I'm sure you don't want to find out, do you?"
Silver then spoke up, "You can't afford to kill us. After all, you still don't have the Card of the Sun."
"So, you figured us out, huh? We'll I never said anything about killing you. He he he!"
"We're not exactly defenseless. We still got our bounce magic."
"Even with that magic, you think you have enough cards to take on a million soldiers and monsters? Face it, Wonder Roosters. You're trapped. There is no where for you to go now."
"That's what you think." said Louis, "We still got our escape routes. Let's go Silver!"
Suddenly a different voice. "Don't be so quick to your deaths, Wonder Roosters!"
Louis then said with a dissatisfied tone "Oh no. Just what we need. The Laru Twins."
The two generals finally decided to join in. "HA HA HA HA!" laughed Blade, "Stupid Wonder Jerks.

Thinking of escaping? Well not today."
"We know of your escape routes and this isn't one of them." said Flame. "Don't even think of risking the fall. It's a long ways down. You might break your entire body to pieces."
The Commandant, now with a boastful smile, spoke "So are you going to give up or will we have to use force?" The heroic pair looked at each other, nodded, and in an instant, fell down from their current position.
"WHAT!" screamed the Commandant in surprise. "HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?" He turned around to his troops. "What are you waiting for? Go after-"
"NO!" ordered Flame. "Nobody move!"
"Why not!?" shouted the Commandant. "In case you haven't noticed, they just fell to their deaths!"
"Yes. I was hoping they did that."
"WHAT!? WHY!?"
CLANK!
A loud metallic noise was heard from beneath the depths of the dark forest floor.
"What was that?" asked the Commandant.
"Just stand in your place, Commandant." From the darkness of the floor, two wings attached to a plinth suddenly sprouted, followed by a box that was underneath said plinth. When the box arose to eye level, the Wonder Roosters were inside behind a barred window.
"I hate to say this," said Louis, "but I think we lost this battle."

999,979,337 words left.

Chapter 7: Prologue 7

In this unknown village, there is a leader. Even though there are only around 20 raccoons, there has always been a village chief who took care of its citizens. He is a chief but sometimes they would call him the Village Elder due to his old age. The town has had generations of chiefs governing the village, making sure everything is alright and that no one leaves the village. It is unknown how time began for these villagers due to them not developing any method of recording history, so reasons why no one was allowed to leave the village was unknown. The only things known as of right now is that there are monsters that exists outside of the village, that is what has been passed down verbally. These villagers do not know what lies outside. They have remained safe in the confines of the small community and no one had ever thought or had any reason to explore. But there must have been a time that they could leave. On the far east of the village there is a gate, but nobody knows about this gate because it has been unused for generations. It has been left unchecked and as a result, it is rusted with vines grown all over, covering it completely, making them blend in with the vines it is now wrapped around. It looks like a part of the wall that it is attached to, so everyone assumes there is no exit. Not even Nuttingham, whose main goal in his life is to break through the boundaries of this village and explore the world that has been cut off from him.

Oh, how desperate Nuttingham is to escape. He has tried it all. He has tried to climb up the wall that surrounds the village but the top of the wall has thorny vines to keep beast from climbing the walls, which unfortunately keeps Nuttingham from reaching the top. He has tried climbing the tall trees and jumping form one to another, but there is a net made from the same thorny vines, also to keep beast at bay, that keep him from progressing. He has tried to use the cliff of the secret spot and climb the sides until he exits the village, but he doesn't have enough stamina to go through the 2 miles of distance he needs to achieve his exit and always ends up falling to the water on the bottom and swimming back to the small shoreline of the bottom of the cliff. Though no one knows of these stunts he has pulled, his sister has noticed his constant struggle to leave the village. She knows of his desire to explore the world that she does not know of. That is why she constantly tries to convince the chief to let him go, and today was one of those days. She waited out in the open where the village chief usually passes by. The village chief is another raccoon but he has a white beard on his face and wears a purple cap made out of burlap. He spots Dawn as he goes on his routine walk.

"Hello Dawn." he salutes. "How is your day going?"

"It's going fine." Dawn responds. "Village Elder, I want to talk about Nuttingham. Why do you insist on keeping him in this village when he wants to leave?"

"Because he is not mature yet."

"But he's old enough."

"Yes, if he was a raccoon, but he's a squirrel. You've seen his actions. He's very childish. If he were a raccoon, 14 years would be of age, but squirrels seem to take longer to mature. Therefore, he is not ready to leave. He'll be in danger if he leaves this village."

It was true. For raccoons, it takes 14 years to be a fully mature adult and Nuttingham was a squirrel. He is the first non-raccoon resident in this village, so the chief had no idea how long it would take Nuttingham to grow up. He assumed it would be the same as a raccoon but no sooner that Nuttingham became 10 and did not show signs of maturity, he knew it would take longer.

"But he's well capable of defending himself." said Dawn, "Remember the giant spider from a year ago?"

"Yes, but he got injured in that battle."

"Village Elder, Nuttingham wishes to adventure. He yearns to see the outside world."

"I understand his position. I also wish for him to journey outside our village."

"So what's stopping you from allowing it?"

"The fact that he acts like a child. If he were more mature, I would allow him, but if I send him out now, then I'll be leading him to his doom."

"But I really don't wish for him to stay here if he does not want to. He is always talking about going on a long and exciting journey."

"See, that's the attitude that I'm talking about. He's been romanticized by the various legends and folktales that

we have been telling him. Ever since he has defeated the giant spider, he's believed that he could be such a legend."
"I understand that Nuttingham has a wild imagination, but that shouldn't hold him back."
"But it does. He is mixing reality with fantasy. He is not experienced enough to tell both apart."
"Well, what if someone goes with him. What if there was a person that would travel with him?"
"And who do you have in mind? No one in this village has ever left and explored. No one knows what is beyond this forest." The chief let out a big sigh. "Dawn, I know you want Nuttingham to explore the world, and you may think that he is ready, but the truth is, he is not. Give him a couple of more years to mature."
"You may say that but do you think he will wait? I have a feeling he's going to sneak out of here one of these days."
"I know. That is why I set up guards around the walls."
"You'd go that far to keep him? You make it sound like he's a prisoner."
"It's all for his own good. We can't let him sneak out, especially without our knowledge, and especially in the night."
"Well I don't think that will stop him. He's going to somehow sneak out. I just know it."
"I won't let that happen."
"Town Elder!"
"Dawn, you are very optimistic, but you must realize, it's very dangerous to allow him to leave."
"But Elder-"
"And regardless of what you want or what he wants, I give the final say and I say no."
"Town Elder-"
"I made my decision. I will not allow him to leave. That is my final answer." The chief started to walk off, back to his daily duties as Dawn just stood there and sighed.

Nuttingham grasped his axe as tight as he could. He swung it with all his might against the tree trunk that had fallen due to some kind of circumstance. Perhaps it was hit by lightning by the thunder storm that happened weeks ago. Nuttingham didn't care however because there was no way he was going to try to chop down a standing tree. Even though he had immense strength, his axe was very flimsy. It was nothing more than a sharpened stone tied to a stick with rope. How Forest Fire chopped wood with such a primitive tool, even for this village's standards, was unknown to Nuttingham. He swung his axe towards the near rotting timber in front of him. Crack! The wood chipped off. He raised his axe again to repeat the process. Crunch! The axe got stuck on the big chunk of wood. Nuttingham tried to nudge it but to no success. He then pulled it as hard as he could. He pulled harder when the axe suddenly slipped out of the wood and Nuttingham was pushed back from the force. He fell down the stacked logs that he had managed to cut and place behind him. He got up and dusted himself when the blade suddenly fell off from the handle. Disgruntled, he tied up the blade back in place. He got in front of the fallen timber once more and raised his arms to chop it. He swung it hard and the blade bounced off the wood, hitting Nuttingham in the face. Fortunately it was not the sharp edge but the back of the axe that did so. Nuttingham fell down on the grass and as this transpired, Lucky came in.
"How's the wood chopping going?" he said.
"Shut up." replied Nuttingham.
Nuttingham and Lucky sat on the big chunk of wood. "This job sucks!" said Nuttingham, "I can't chop this hard wood."
"Come on." said Lucky, "Let's go play. We're supposed to continue our adventure."
"But sis says I gotta chop this wood, and you know how sis is when I don't do something she says."
"Well she won't mind a break. Come on Nuttingham."
"Yeah, I guess a break wouldn't hurt." Nuttingham then got up on his feet on the ground. "Alright, let's go."
"Alright! Now where did we left off?"
"I don't know. It was your turn to remember where we left off."
"No. It was your turn."
"No it wasn't, it was yours."
"Nu-uh, it was yours."

"Argh. It's times like these that I wish someone would come up with a way to put your thoughts on something so you can remember it later on."
"Well there isn't, that's why you gotta remember them."
As the boys tried to regain their memory, they started walking towards the secret spot. When they arrived, Nuttingham walked up to the edge of the cliff and faced Lucky who was behind him. "Okay," he said, "I think I remember. We were at the cliff where you met the evil Crab King."
"Okay."
Nuttingham crouched down, spread his arms outwards, lifted his tail upwards, and spoke in a gruff voice, or as gruff as a 14 year old squirrel could. "Alright Lucky," he started, "I got your friend Nuttingham in my dungeon. Become my slave or else."
"Never!" said Lucky, "I will never surrender to you."
"Ho ho ho! Then your friend shall perish along with your village."
"That's what you think. I know your weakness."
"You're lying. No one knows my weakness."
"Well I do. It's salt."
"No. You found out my weakness, but you don't have any salt with you."
"Yeah well unlucky for you crab king, we're standing on a cliff with salt on the bottom. I'm going to use my power to make a-Wait a minute," Lucky interrupted the performance because he just remembered something, "didn't we use a crab mask when you played the part of the crab king."
Nuttingham responded in his normal voice "Uhh...I accidentally dropped it on the cliff."
"What do you mean you dropped it?"
"I was fooling around with it and I didn't strap it on tight. Come on, let's keep playing."
"Umm...like I said," Lucky returned to his heroic tone of voice, "I will use my powers to activate the salt."
"You fool," as did Nuttingham with his monster voice, "Salt requires a lot of power. You will run out of power before you can summon any salt."
"I don't need to summon salt. I'll summon a salt monster instead."
"HA HA HA! Just try it."
Lucky moved forward in front of the edge. "Just watch. I will use my powers to summon a salt monster to eat you. When I wave my hand, a salt monster will...hey, are you sure that's how salt works?"
"I don't know." Once again, Nuttingham broke out of character. "All I know is salt comes from the big water. I think it comes from the rain or something. Come on, let's keep playing."
"Uhh yeah...ahem...when I wave my hand, a salt monster will- Hey, I see something on the bottom."
"What do you mean?" Nuttingham said as he stood up straight. The two boys broke out of character and Nuttingham went to see what was going on.
"Look." said Lucky, "There's something down there."
Nuttingham gazed at the bottom of the cliff, scanning it to see if there was something off. "I don't see anything." The cliff was 3 miles high off the ground and in the bottom lay a small piece of land. This small extension of land didn't lead to anywhere as it was just a small shore line with grass on top. The cliff pretty much surrounded the area so the small peninsula on the bottom just sat there with no purpose. Though 3 miles is pretty far, Lucky insisted that there was something strange about it.
"Over there. See that spot?" said Lucky.
"What spot?"
"That spot over there."
"I don't see anything. You could just be seeing a rock."
"It doesn't look like a rock. It looks weird."
Nuttingham still did not see anything, however a chance to explore was something Nuttingham would always volunteer. He took off his shoes, grasped the floor, and started to climb down.
"What are you doing!?" said Lucky with a shriek.
"If there is something down there then I'll see for myself."
"Hey come on, you'll fall and break your neck."
Nuttingham started to descend as he replied to Lucky "Don't worry. I've been down there many times. I'll be

careful."
Lucky didn't listen however and continued to urge Nuttingham to get back up."Come on! Get back up! This isn't funny you know? If you fall down, I'm not going to get you. Nuttingham, are you listening to me!? You're going to fall and get killed!" Nuttingham kept climbing down, one step at a time, careful to not slip. When he was around 1 mile down, he looked down to check but he still could not see anything. He kept climbing down, slowly and steady. Around halfway of the second mile, he finally spotted something. "I'm starting to make it out." He tried to concentrate on making out the figure. He spotted a white dot on the floor. It was still too high to make out any details. He kept on climbing down and this time made it to the second mile mark. "I think I can see it now." He concentrated again to see if he could make out the figure on the bottom. Nuttingham's eyes suddenly widened. "WHAT!?" he shouted. "NO! It couldn't be!" with disbelief on his words, he continued to climb down, this time faster than before. He wanted to confirm what he saw so he scurried. Eventually he made it close enough to the ground to jump down. He landed on the grassy shoreline. He now saw it as clear as day: a white raccoon. It was just like the other raccoons, except it had white fur instead of brown. It was lying face down, unconscious. "I WAS RIGHT!" shouted Nuttingham with a big smile on his face. "I can't believe this! A white raccoon! This is unbelievable! I'm meeting a white raccoon! I'm certain, I'm really certain that he comes from the outside world. Oh man. I got so many questions to ask!" then he gave a frown, "That is if he's still alive." Nuttingham quickly grabbed the white raccoon and put it in between his back and tail, using his tail to keep him firmly in place. He started climbing up the cliff with rapid speed. He was so excited, he could not wait to show everyone in the village. After a few minutes, he finally reached the top. Lucky was relieved to see Nuttingham okay but then his jaw dropped from shock. "What is that?" he asked.
"Not what, who! I found a white raccoon!" Nuttingham said as he was putting his shoes back on.
"A white raccoon!? I don't believe it!"
"Yeah, it's really exciting, isn't it!?" The two started going forward, back to the village.
"Where did he came from?" asked Lucky.
"I don't know but he didn't fell from here, that's for sure!"
"Do you think he came from the outside world?"
"He had to. Where else would he come from?"
"Oh man. This is really exciting!"
"Yeah. Come on, Lucky. Let's get him to the village." Nuttingham, with a giant smile on his face, ran as fast as he could to the village. His excitement could not be contained any longer, which drove him to go faster. "Come on, hurry up! Push forward!"

"Come on, hurry up! Push forward!" screamed Blade.
"Yeah, don't make King Geo wait any more than you already made him!" said Flame. The two Generals have brought the Wonder Roosters to the court room of King Geo with our heroes hands tied behind them. They had no weapons on them and the royal guards of the tower were all invited to the court room to witness the Wonder Roosters as they walked shamefully towards the Demon King. The duo have been dragged from the Grimm Forest, being paraded in front of the Astharians to show that not even the adventuresome Wonder Roosters could defy King Geo forever. When they reached the tower entrance, they were let out of the cage and were in bondage all the way to the top of the Demon's Tower. Now the Wonder Roosters walked the court room full of pestering elf soldiers, taunting them of their folly for not obeying King Geo.
"WE DID IT!"
"We finally captured the Wonder Roosters!"
"Victory is ours!"
After passing the gallery of rambunctious soldiers, the duo now stood in front of the evil King, this being the first time they have laid eyes upon him.
"Your majesty," said Flame, "we have finally brought you the troublesome Wonder Roosters."

999,976,364 words left.

Chapter 8: Prologue 8

"What are you doing?" screamed Blade at Louis. "Bow down to the King." Louis stood his ground. Even in front of the face of the evil King, he would not wield to him. Blade, however, could care less about how he felt. He clenched his talons and punched Louis in the jaw. "BOW DOWN I SAY!" he shouted as Louis was smacked and fell to the floor.
"Now now," said King Geo, "compose yourself General Blade Laru. Acquiesce to not be so strict toward our privileged company."
"Privileged?"
"The Wonder Roosters be the most honored warriors of our world. I deem them 'privileged' to be in my court."
"Actually, I meant to ask what privileged means."
Flame spoke up "Stop being stupid, Blade."
The elf troops who were summoned to the gathering were ordered to return to their post. Now only Louis, Silver, the Generals, and King Geo were in the court. Louis got up and straighten himself as best as he could as his two hands were tied by the wrist. He moved forward to speak to the evil King, who was 4 times bigger than him.
"So you're the one who began the Era of Darkness, Geo!" he said.
King Geo replied "And you two must be the grand swashbucklers who boast about dodging my clout protracted."
"Geo, what have you done with the Princess?"
"Your patrician is secure. Do not be distressed concerning her."
"She better be!"
"HEY!" exclaimed Blade, "Watch your mouth you little cretin."
"What are you planning on doing with the Card of the Sun." continued Louis, ignoring Blade's warning.
"Enough." spoke King Geo, "It be I who shall solicit the inquiries at this juncture. Do not be up to snuff to slight your position, infantile swashbuckler, for I am the sovereign of Asthar at present. Now respond toward this inquiry. Is it factual to facilitate that a hawker has furnish over the imperative Card of the Sun to you?"
"Yeah. What of it?"
"Watch the attitude!" once again exclaimed Blade.
King Geo continued "How did the dealer clasp the card?"
"I don't know."
"What more did he acquaint with you?"
"He told us that we'd be able to summon the Chariot and defeat both you and Lar."
"What!?" once again Blade spoke out. "You mean to say you can summon the Chariot of Sorrows right now?"
"Yeah, if I had the card in my hand." answered back Louis.
"So where be the card at this instant?" asked King Geo.
"It's hidden and I'm not telling you where it is."
"Oh no?" said Blade. "You'll change your mind if I cut your fingers, one by one."
"Torture me all you want. The world will be in a lot worse condition if I give the card to you guys."
"He he he. Well Master? Will you grant me my request?"
"Compose yourself, General Blade Laru." said King Geo, "Acquiesce to not be too hasty."
"Is that a yes or a no?"
"Nary."
"Uhh...is that a-"
"It means NO, stupid!" replied back Flame at Blades questioning.
King Geo paid no attention and resumed questioning the Wonder Roosters. "Do you distinguish that at hand, there is naught you can act?"
"I know that I'm in danger," answered back Louis, "but I won't risk Asthar for my own safety."
"How gallant of you, but I shall contract that card no matter what. If you do not relinquish the card to me,

consequences will follow."
"Do with us whatever you like. We've prepared ourselves for anything, isn't that right, Silver?"
"That's right." responded Silver, "Do your worst."
"Very well then." said King Geo. "I was hopeful that the stipulations would go serenely, but I comprise no alternative. General Flame Laru, General Blade Laru, take them to the edifice tract for enslaved proletariat toil. Let them labor for their foolhardiness."
Flame bowed down and said "Yes, your ma-"
"SLAVE LABOR!?" bolted Blade. "But I wanted to torture them."
"Shut up and do what you are told you jabberwock." replied Flame to Blade's outburst.
"Oh, I never get to have any fun."

"Is he alright?" asked Nuttingham.
"Yes. He's just exhausted. He just needs to rest."
The mysterious white raccoon was brought in to the home of the only doctor. He was laid on the ground of the shack where the doctor and Nuttingham where waiting for him to awaken. However, they were not the only ones. Outside of the shack, the whole town was waiting at the front. The news of the white raccoon has stirred the entire populace in such a way that no one has ever experienced anything like it. This was a spectacle that may not happen again.
"Do you know what happened to him?" asked Nuttingham.
"I'm not sure." answered the doctor, "All I know is that his body is extremely tired."
"Doctor! Look! He's waking up!"
The white raccoon started to move. First it was just slightly but eventually he started to get up. Finally, he was sitting up straight, holding his head. "Urgh!" he said, "My head. My body."
"Hey, are you awake?" asked Nuttingham.
"Huh?" answered back the white raccoon, "Who are you?"
"He's awake!" Nuttingham said with a big smile on his face. In no time, he quickly ran towards the white raccoon. "Oh boy! Hey, can you tell me what the outside world looks like? What kind of food do they have? Why is your fur white?"
The doctor came and started pulling him back. "Nuttingham, get off my patient!" However, Nuttingham was still shouting off questions and struggling to get back in front of the white raccoon. The doctor eventually over powered Nuttingham and kicked him out of the doorway and locked the door. The doctor returned to his patient.
"I'm sorry about him." said the doctor, "He's always eager to learn new things. He couldn't help himself."
"I guess that's alright." said the White Raccoon as he got up.
"Though I'm not surprised. This whole village has never seen a white raccoon."
"Well speaking of that, where am I?"
"I'm afraid I can't answer that. This village is very secluded."
"Secluded village? So I'm in some kind of outskirts?"
"What does that mean?"
"You don't know what an outskirts is? Man, I must really be far off."
The white raccoon looked around and he finally noticed something. "Wait a minute, was I recuperating on the floor?" Suddenly, a feeling a fatigue hit him. "Urgh! I feel really tired."
"Well you were found somewhere on the big water. If it wasn't for Nuttingham, you probably would've drifted off."
"Big water?"
"Yes, I assume that's how you got here. This village is covered with trees and there is no way to enter."
"Wait a minute!" The white raccoons eyes where wide open with concern. He got up, ran up to the doctor, and clutched him by the fur of his chest. "Listen! You got to help me! You gotta hear what I got say!"
"Huh!?" the doctor was confused.
"HELP! I NEED HELP! THERE'S TROUBLE! BIG TROUBLE!" screamed the white raccoon.
Outside on the doorway, the entire village was looking at each other, trying to figure out what was going on as

they heard all these screams, including Nuttingham.
"HEY!" Nuttingham shouted back, "What are you doing to White Raccoonham?"
"Calm down!" said the doctor. "What do you think you're doing, screaming like that?"
"I...I'm sorry!" said the white raccoon as he calmed himself. "I just got excited, but I have something to tell you."
"Well, tell me without panicking."
"The world...the world is in danger!"
"What?"
"Yes, our world is going to be destroyed. There's a yeti who's aiming to transform this entire planet into ice!"
"Ice?"
"Yes. Word of mouth is spreading around that a monstrous yeti wants to transform the entire planet into one giant ice block."
"Ice?" The doctor had no idea what the white raccoon was talking about. At this instant, the door slammed opened. Nuttingham ran in and tackled down the doctor.
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO WHITE RACCOONHAM!?"
"Nuttingham," said the doctor as he got back up from the pounce, "what are you doing, attacking me like that." He got up and got in front of Nuttingham.
"Well he keeps screaming so I keep thinking you're doing something awful to him."
"Why would I do that?"
"I don't know. You're the crazy doctor."
The white raccoon spoke up "Calm down there...Nuttingham is it?"
Upon hearing this, Nuttingham pushed the doctor aside and ran as fast as lightning to the white raccoon, shocking the white raccoon at his speed. "Yeah, Nuttingham, soon to be a great adventurer, just like you."
"Me?" answered back the white raccoon, "Hold on, I'm no adventurer."
"You're not? But aren't you on a big adventure right now?"
"No. I just ended up drifting here."
The doctor spoke "Well how exactly did you ended up here?"
"Well, I lost my way when I was on my journey to a place called I'scrim."
"I'scrim?" asked Nuttingham, "What is that?"
"It's supposedly where the yeti lives."
"A yeti! Oh my goodness! You've seen a yeti?"
"You don't even know what that is." said the doctor.
"But it sounds exciting." answered back Nuttingham. "What's a yeti? What's a yeti?"
The doctor pulled back Nuttingham once again to give the white raccoon some breathing room. "Knock it off, Nuttingham. White Racoonham, please tell us everything in detail, starting with who you are."
"Yeah, sure." replied the white raccoon. "My name is Doubt. I come from a far off place called Fireheart."
"Oh, what is that?" said Nuttingham, who has reappeared right in front of the white raccoon called Doubt to the amazement of the doctor, who swore he had a grasp on the overzealous squirrel.
"Uhh...Fireheart is where I live, but I guess its uncharted to you guys."
"Uncharted? What does that mean?"
"It means that it hasn't been recorded. In fact, I'm sure there are hundreds of places in this planet that has not been explored, like this village I suppose."
"You mean the whole world is a mystery? Sounds like a great adventure to have."
"You're really optimistic about adventuring, aren't you?"
"If that means excited, then yeah. I'm going to become a great adventurer and I'm going to explore the whole world and-"
"WILL YOU TWO SHUT UP FOR A MNUTE!" yelled the doctor, who was exasperated by the chatter the two were having. Nuttingham and Doubt were completely surprised and ended up falling to their knees.
"What's the deal?" said Nuttingham.
"Yeah." said Doubt.
"What are you doing?" the doctor addressed Doubt, "You were panicking about the world being destroyed

earlier, and now you're just-"
"AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!" screamed Doubt, causing Nuttingham to drop on the floor completely from shock as he covered his ears. "I FORGOT! THE WORLD IS-"
"I know! I know!" said the doctor, "That's what I'm trying to figure out. Just tell me what happened."
"Oh yeah." Doubt took a deep breath. "Yeah, okay. It all started back when I was in Fireheart. I was just hanging around with my friends, just having a good time, when someone came rushing by us. We were curious about this so we decided to follow him. Turns out, there was a meeting with the village chief. He said that there was an evil omen in the distance. The village chief said that word of mouth has been spreading that the world's end was coming. An evil force was going to submerge the entire world into ice. He told of this to our leader, Great Master If Looks Could kill, but the Great Master did not believe it. He just scoffed that it was just a rumor, so he wanted proof. According to the rumors, the yeti whose responsible for this lives in the very far north. We prepared our journey to the unknown land of pure snow and ice known as I'scrim. We had little to go on how to get there, but we proceeded nonetheless. After preparing ourselves, we walked for days until we reached Raclantis to seek Great Master's guidance. He provided us with a ship and wished us luck on our journey and we set off to the top of the world. We spent days sailing to the I'scrim but tragedy struck when we were attack by that no good pirate and his cannon balls. Our boat ended up getting destroyed. I was knocked out but when I woke up, I was on a piece of wood from what was left over from the ship. I spent days and nights on that piece of wood, drifting in the endless ocean. The only thing that kept me alive was the fish that I had to catch with my bare hands. After weeks on my small raft, it started to fall apart, and eventually it did. I swam for hours and eventually landed on a small clearing."
"Then what happened?" asked an excited Nuttingham who was sitting on the floor as Doubt told the tale.
"I lost conscience and eventually you found me, I guess."
"Wow! That was an amazing story!"
"So in the end," said the doctor, "you never found out if the rumor was true?"
"No," replied Doubt, "I did not."
"Are you going to go back to this I'scrim place?" asked Nuttingham.
"I don't know. I don't even know where I am anymore." A sudden pain suddenly hit Doubt. "AGH! My stomach!"
"You're still injured." said the doctor, "You gotta rest."
"Well how about giving me a bed?"
"I don't know what that is."
"You don't even know what a bed is? This village truly is out in the boondocks. Can't you give me something soft to lie on then? Unless you don't know what that is either."
"Yes, we know what 'soft' means. I doubt we have anything of that matter however but I'll see what I can do." As the doctor left to find something for Doubt to lie on, Nuttingham took this opportunity for a one on one chat.
"Hey, White Racconham."
"Why do you keep calling me White Racconham?"
"What do you mean?"
"Well, actually, why do you add 'ham' to the end?"
"Huh? Well that's how you refer to an elder you don't know. Someone who you never met or meeting for the first time."
"Oh...you mean like Mister?"
"Mister?"
"Yeah. Where I live, you would be calling me 'Mr. White Raccoon'."
"Oh, I see. So...I would be Mr. Nutting in your home, right?"
"Nuttting is your name? I thought your full name is Nuttingham."
"Nope. My name is Nutting but everyone got used to calling me Nuttingham, so that's what I go by."
"I see."
"Well as I was saying, White Raccoonham, you kept mentioning that ice stuff. What's ice?"
"You can call me Doubt, you know. You really don't know what ice is?"

"Nu-uh."
"Well let me put it this way. You know what water is, don't you?"
"Yeah."
"Well ice is water but hardened."
"Hardened water?" this concept was apparently hard for Nuttingham to imagine. "How is that possible?"
"Well where I live, it's so cold that the water becomes hard. So cold that it will hurt your hands if you hold on to it for a long time."
"What happens when it gets hot?"
"It turns back into water."
"WOW! That's amazing! Tell me more!"
"Well...there's also snow."
"Snow?"
"Yeah. Snow is like ice but much softer. It's still cold however."
"Really?"
The two continued on with their conversation with Nuttingham hanging on to every single word that Doubt would tell him. On the outside of the shack, both the doctor and Dawn were eavesdropping on their conversation.
"Nuttingham is getting along fine with him." said Dawn.
"Well you know him." said the doctor, "He's always interested in learning things about the outside world. Though I feel sorry for him. Doubt's arrival will just make him more anxious to leave, even though he can't."
"Well why not?"
"Dawn, don't start that again. He still hasn't grown up. You know that."
"Well I still think he's capable of handling himself."
"Well the Village Elder said no and he gives the final say on the matter. I'm sorry Dawn."
"Well I'm not giving up. I'll find someway to convince the Town Elder."
"Go ahead." the doctor started to walk away, "You're just wasting your time."
She could hear Nuttingham's laughter going through the shack as he embraced all the words that Doubt would tell him. Stories of Doubts hometown Fireheart and the surrounding areas. "Tell me more! Tell me more! I want to know everything." She could hear Nuttingham's excitement going through the shack.
"Don't worry Nuttingham," she said, "I'll get you out of here no matter what."

Beneath the darkness of the Grimm Forest floor, there laid a system of tunnels. This was a gold mine where King Geo sent out slaves and prisoners to mine. The area was lit by florescent flowers that glowed and provided light. The trunks of the trees from above, and all around, grew vegetation and moss. The caverns where largely due to the digging everyone was doing. It was quite spacious that one could get lost if they strayed too far from the main path. The workers were aforementioned slaves and prisoners but also some of the common folk were sent here to work, both men and women elves alike. The main job for these peasants were to stack up rocks on mining carts, though these weren't regular carts. These carts were flat surfaced and the bottom was arched with spikes underneath and with a decorative face on the side. It suspended from the ground with magic. And to make things worse, elf soldiers were abundant to keep things in order.
"Come on you useless slaves," shouted Blade, "put your backs into it!" Normally the mines were regulated by an officer in charge but in this case, the generals were sent as well. "Come on, the gold ain't gonna mine itself. Come on, come on."
"Blade," called out Flame, "don't forget about you know who."
"Who?"
"I JUST TOLD YOU NOT TO FORGET! I'm talking about the Wonder Roosters."
"What about 'em?"
"Stupid jabberwock! These are the Wonder Roosters I'm talking about! We got to be extra careful with those guys!"
The Wonder Roosters, the heroes and hope of Asthar, where now slaves to King Geo. They have been stripped of their weapons, their accessories, even their clothes save for a pair of old, brown, grimy shorts. At

this moment, two elf soldiers were taunting the duo and Louis was about to throw a rock at one of them, but Silver stopped him and pulled him back.
"Calm down, Louis," said Silver, "You're going to get in trouble."
"Well they keep taunting me."
"Louis, we can't be reckless anymore now that we're prisoners."
"I know, I know." Louis said with desperation in his voice. No sooner that this was said, Blade stepped in.
"What are you doing, slacking off? Get to work!"
"Alright, alright!" said Louis as the duo ran back to their task.
"GET TO WORK ALREADY!" Blade returned back towards Flame.
"Don't keep your eyes off of them Blade. They are up to something."
"Oh calm down, Flame. We took their weapons and set up guards everywhere."
"Don't be too confident. Remember, the Wonder Roosters are the only adventurers who have defied King Geo over and over. They are not to be taken lightly."
The once troublesome twosome went back to their post. Louis grabbed a pickaxe and started hitting the rocks in front of him while Silver was in charge of collecting rocks and putting them in a mining crate. Behind the two and the crate stood an elf soldier, watching them as they worked.
"So how are we going to get out of this?" whispered Louis.
"I don't know if this is a good plan but I have a theory. Remember what the peddler said about the Card of the Sun?"
"Yeah. 'He who holds the Card of the Sun up upon them on the top of the Demon's Tower shall call forth the Sun Chariot, slay the wicked, and soar the heavens.'"
"Well I just had a thought. That court room where Geo sits. I think that's the top of the tower."
"Wait a minute, are you implying..."
"Yeah. I think we can summon the Chariot from that room."
"So you are saying that when were in that room, we use the card right then and there?"
"Exactly, but the problem is I don't know if it will actually work."
"Well we can't risk doing that. If it fails, then Geo will have the card on his hands and all hope will be lost."
"Hey," said the guard, "what are you two talking about there?"
"Nothing." answered back Silver.
"Don't give me that. If you are planning a breakout, forget it. We got our eyes on you."
The duo went back to their duties and Louis whispered "He's got a point. There are guards everywhere. We can't move a step without being followed."
"You're right." said Silver. "It's impossible to leave right now."
"Great. Looks like I'll have to put up with being a prisoner for now. Let's save that theory you have as a last resort."
"HEY!" said the guard. "Quiet down you two."

"OH MY GOODNESS!" said Nuttingham, "Lucky, you missed out on all the great things he had to say."
"Well what did he say?" said Lucky.
"You won't believe the things he had to say! It's like a completely different world from here."
"Like what? Like what? I want to know! I want to know!"
"Follow me, Lucky!"
The boys who were at the entrance of the secluded forest started walking towards the secret spot. There was no better place for Nuttingham to talk about the great things he has heard about the outside world from Doubt, but his excitement got the better of him and he proceeded to explain things along the way, all the while jumping and skipping from joy. "He told me about giant mountains covered in white powder. He told me about people called pirates who go on adventures. He told me about pointed buildings called 'pyramids' where kings and treasure are buried. He told me about mountains that spit fire. He told me about a forest haunted by a spirit that will snatch you up. He told me about a town where raccoons dress in funny clothes and live in big houses."
"More! More! I want to know more!"

"Imagine this Lucky! Huge mountains, white as the moon, filled with white stuff called 'snow'. It's very cold and wet. Now imagine climbing this white mountain and you see a hole, so you go and get a closer look, and it starts to spit out fire! Fire that reaches the sky. You start to run away but you end up tripping and falling into a- AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH!" Nuttingham was so excited that he was not paying attention and ended up tripping on the big hole that was in the middle of the forest. Nuttingham fell down but landed just as fast. It turned out the big hole that was a mystery to Nuttingham was not as deep as he thought to be. "OW!" he said.
"Nuttingham!" screamed Lucky from above. "Are you okay?"
"Argh! My head! Yeah, I'm fine!"
"Can you see anything down there?"
"Yeah, there's a bit of light down...AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!"
"Nuttingham! What's going on!?"
"There's some kind of weird thing down here! I think it's some kind of MONSTER!"

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Chapter 9: Prologue 9

There was a small amount of light that was shining through the hole but the sun was already setting so it wasn't too clear underneath. Nuttingham recoiled back from the shock of what he saw. It was hidden in the shadows against the opposite side. He could not make it out clearly but he did saw a face staring back at him. He was pinned back, however he regained enough sense to control himself. Still being cautious, he stood straight up. Apparently what was staring back at him did not move at all.
"Nuttingham? Nuttingham!?" Lucky was screaming from above but Nuttingham did not respond back because his fear was now curiosity. As Lucky kept screaming for confirmation, Nuttingham crept closer to examine whatever it was that was there.
"Lucky!" he shouted, "I found something!"
"Is it a monster!?"
"No, it's not a monster. It's some kind of rock shaped like a raccoon." What Nuttingham got scared from was a statue. It was a carving of a raccoon's head, sitting on top of a pedestal. It looked like it was carved ages ago. Nuttingham has never seen anything like this.
"What was that, Nuttingham?" shouted back Lucky.
"A rock. It's a rock that's shaped like a raccoon. I've never seen anything like this." Nuttingham proceeded to inspect the statue. "Wow. This thing looks great. It's almost like a real raccoon's head."
"Nuttingham, what are you doing down there?"
"Huh? This thing is loose." The statue was heavy but Nuttingham was strong enough to notice that it was not attached to the wall.
"Nuttingham, get out of there before the monster eats you." shouted Lucky.
Nuttingham grabbed both sides of the statue and pulled it out of the wall.
"Whoa! It's a cave!" Behind the statue, an opening that was perfectly rectangular in shape was present, as if the statue was merely the door to this opening. "There's a cave behind this rock."
"NUTTINGHAM! WHY WON'T YOU RESPOND TO ME!" screamed Lucky.
"Today is full of surprises!" Nuttingham said to himself.
"Nuttingham! What are you-"
"Stop screaming already." Nuttingham finally responded to Lucky. "I'm coming back up." Nuttingham climbed back up and met up with Lucky.
"Nuttingham, you're okay. The monster didn't eat you."
"No, no, There was no monster."
"But you said-"
"No, Lucky, listen. There's a strange rock in the shape of a raccoon down there but what's cooler is that there's a cave behind it, and we're going to check it out."
"But what if there's a really big monster inside the cave?"
"Yeah! This is the adventure we've been looking for!"
"Well not me! I'm not going in!" Lucky started to head back to the village. The situation has left him temporarily shocked. He needed to calm himself.
"Wait, Lucky!" Nuttingham grabbed Lucky by the shoulder. "How many times you have said that you were bored with this life? How many times have you wished for an adventure? Well this is your chance!"
"That was YOU who said that!"
"Well...you've said it too!"
"No, I haven't!"
"Oh come on Lucky!"
"Why don't you just go in by yourself?"
"What? You don't want to share my adventure?"
"Yeah. If you want to go badly, go by yourself."
"If that's how you feel, fine, I'll explore it on my own and keep all the treasure to myself."
"Well good luck then!...Wait, did you say treasure!?"

Days passed since the Wonder Roosters became prisoners. They toiled day and night with little rest and even less food but they did not waver one bit. They were determined to not give in to King Geo and his Overlord. Today, they were sent back to the court room to have audience with the evil King and entered with only their assigned brown shorts. They were not even allowed to wear any formal clothes.
"Thus Louis and Silver," said King Geo, "how be days contained by the manacles of slavery?"
"We don't care about anything you do to us!" responded Louis, "We won't give you the card!"
"What!?" said Blade, "You little punk! I'll gut you open!"
"Blade!", said Flame, "Calm down will you!"
"I can't! This runt's getting on my nerves!"
Louis continued "We know all about the Chariot's power. It's the only thing that will defeat you and Lar."
"I see," responded King Geo, "as a result, you repudiate to offer the Card of the Sun?"
"Yeah."
"Very well. Guards, direct her in." From behind Geo on the opposite doorway, in came three guards with a girl being forced forward by knife.
"Se...Selena!" screamed Louis. Selena was Louis childhood friend. Though she was not adventurous as the Wonder Roosters, Louis and Silver always came home after their ventures to simply relax with her company. Sadly, she is now in the mercy of King Geo.
"Kneel down you!" said the front most soldier as he kicked her down.
"NO! SELENA!" yelled Louis. He wanted to ran towards her but Blade snatched him by the arm with his talons. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HER!"
"Well," said King Geo, "it emerge you do care about this lass, neigh?"
"LET HER GO, GEO!"
"Oh, I shall allow her to be off." He then raised his cloud hands and hover them above Selena. "As before long I shall renovate her into a wooden statue so as to be."
"NO!"
"If you do not long in favor of this woman toward becoming a wooden statue, bestow me the Card of the Sun!"
"Louis..." uttered Silver in a concerning matter.
"What should I do?" Louis was thinking to himself, "I can't let Geo have the card, but he's going to turn Selena into wood. What am I going to do?"
"Don't do it Louis!" said Selena.
"What!?" responded Louis.
"Everyone is depending on you two to save us! Don't worry about me! Worry about the future of Ashtar!"
"No Selena! I can't let him turn you into a wood statue."
"My safety is little compared to Ashtar. Let him do what he wants. Just don't give him the card!"
"What do I do? What do I do?" Louis was now stuck between a rock and a hard place. If he gave the card, he could save Selena but the Era of Darkness would never end. If he didn't give the card, there could still be a chance the save Asthar but Selena would be sacrificed.
"Louis," said Silver, "How about it?"
"Silver?"
"It might be our only chance to save Selena."
"Silence!" said Flame, "Nobody gave you permission to speak."
"You don't mean-" said Louis.
"Let's show him the card." said Silver.
"Hey!" said Flame, "I thought I told-wait, what?"
"Something tells me the situation is not going to get any better." said Silver, "Let's just take a chance and hope for the best."
"Yeah, listen to your friend. It's all over for you, Wonder Roosters! You might as well just give up!"
"No," said Selena, "Don't do it! With the card, Geo will take over Asthar and the Era of Darkness will never end!"

Louis closed his eyes, his head tilted downward. With a sad expression in his voice he said "Alright Geo, you win. I'll show you the card!"
"Louis, No!" cried out Selena.
"What?" said Flame, "Are you serious?"
"Yes." said Louis sternly.
"Well alleged, Louis." said King Geo, "Now, inform me where the card is."
"I'm going to need my clothes first."
"What for?" said Flame, "You're not going anywhere. Just tell us where the card is."
"I'm going to need my clothes before I tell you where the card is."
"Why you! Your majesty, he's planning something, I know it."
"Do not be unquiet." said King Geo, "I do not deem so as to his garments will pretense any tribulations."
Louis made another demand, "I also want my pistol back."
"Hey!" said Flame, "That's asking too much now!" Blade positioned himself in attack mode. He too was disturbed by this request.
"That is no quandary at all." said King Geo, "Bestow him his weapon as well."
Flame was hesitant but he had no choice if it was the King's order. "Alright, but it's not going to be loaded."
"That's fine with me." said Louis. A few moments later, Flame showed up with all their clothes and accessories. He hurried them to get dressed on the spot, which they did.
"Alright," said Blade, "you got your clothes, now tell us where the treasure is."
"What about my pistol?"
Blade had Louis' arrow pistol clutched on his talons, waving it in front of him. "If you want your toy back, give us the card first."
"Alright, fine." Louis got on down on one knee.
"What are you doing?" said Flame.
"It's a TRAP!" said Blade.
"No." said Louis, "The card is inside a secret compartment between the sole and heel of my shoe."
"Between the soul and heal of your shoe?"
"Yeah."
"No wonder we didn't find anything when we searched your clothes." said Flame.
"Yeah." said Blade. "Quiet ingenious."
"Don't praise him, stupid."
Louis stood up straight. "Alright Geo, I got the card." In his right hand, Louis had it: the Card of the Sun, the sole item that could save Asthar and defeat King Geo and the Overlord.
"Tremendous," said King Geo, "now dispense it over to my secondaries."
"That's the Card of the Crown?" said Blade, "But it's just a piece of paper."
"Yeah." agreed Flame, "It's junk. Your majesty, he's tricking you." Both generals were not impressed with this card. It was old with jagged edges due to age. It looked worn and brown. As they say, it was pretty much a piece of paper.
"Neigh." said King Geo, "It be the Card of the Sun incontrovertibly. It's clout, it inveigles me in. It is undeniably the factual card."
"I don't get it but if you say so, King Geo."
The mythical Card of the Sun. There is a legend that says that the Sun Chariot will come forward to those who bare the card. In the Battle Between Good and Evil, the card was used as a last resort, however, King Geo was powerful enough to repel the Chariot's power and in the end, the Chariot was lost. King Geo, though he now ruled Ashtar, could not rest for the Sun Chariot, as long as it remained, was a threat to him. The only way he could truly rule Ashtar is if he either destroyed the card, as it was the only thing that could summon the Sun Chariot, or to have the card summon the Chariot and destroy it. But as he stated earlier, he wanted the Chariot to be presented as a trophy to his Overlord. He was going to inhale the power of the Chariot and expunge it so that the Chariot was nothing more than a hollow husk, and thus the Chariot would be nothing but decoration and the card just another piece of paper.
Louis just stood there, staring at the ancient relic. This card that everyone talked about, the one that could save

the world, the most valuable treasure in all of Ashtar second to the Sun Chariot itself, it has been in his possession all this time. Louis never thought anything of it until now.
"WELL!?" Flame yelled, snapping Louis from his blank state. Apparently, Louis and Silver were waiting for something to happen. "What are you doing? Give us the card already!"
"Yeah," followed Blade, "hand it over already!"
Louis and Silver were now back to back, pressed against two very angry and violent Generals.
"Silver," said Louis, "nothing's happening."
"I've noticed," said Louis, "but we can't give up now that they've seen it. We gotta buy more time."
Louis thought for a moment but he had no idea what to do, as did Silver, who was usually the one with inspirations. But in this situation, he too was at a lost.
"Uhh..." stuttered Louis in an attempt to stall for time, "I'm...uhh...Se...Selena! I want Selena freed before I give you the card!" With a gesture from King Geo's hand, Selena was released. She ran all the way to embrace Louis in his arms.
"We're going to need more than that." said Silver.
"Selena!" said Louis as he embraced the scared Selena, "Are you okay?"
"Alright," said Blade, "you got your girlfriend back, now hand over the card!"
"This is not good." Louis said to Silver, "The card isn't doing anything, Silver."
"I noticed." said Silver with a more calm voice, though he was just as worried, "It was just a theory."
"Well that theory has-"
"ENOUGH!" said Flame, "I see what has happened! You changed your minds! Well it's too late for that! You're odds of winning now are up in the air! Give us the card!"
At this instant, something clicked in Silver's head. He suddenly had a thought. "Wait a second!" he said.
"Do we even have that much time left!?" said Louis, desperately.
"Louis, remember what that peddler said?"
"'He who holds the Card of the Sun up upon them on the top of the Demon's Tower shall call forth the Sun Chariot, slay the wicked, and soar the heavens.', yeah I know it but what of it?"
"That must be it. You got to raise it up in the air."
"What? Are you being serious?"
The Wonder Roosters were too busy trying to decipher the proverb that they didn't notice that there was a crowd of guards now surrounding them.
"If you're not going to give us the card," said Blade, "we'll just take it away from you! Guards, take that card!"
At an instant, the guards suddenly rushed towards our hero.
"LOUIS!" said Silver.
"Alright, here goes!" Louis raised the card above his head as high as he could while the soldiers were now inches away from stabbing them.
FLASH!
Suddenly, everything was swallowed up in white light! The light was so strong, no one could see through it. The light was so grand, from the outside, the Demon's Tower had rays of light shooting from every single opening going straight up into the sky. The light was so magnificent that from the highest mountain, you could see a giant beam of light shooting straight up from the Green Deck mountains, expanding more as it climbed higher and higher. The light was so powerful that from the heavens, you could see the massive light shooting like an arrow, cutting the dark skies of the fairy tale like scenery of the cosmos, coming straight from the star Asthar like a beacon of light going through a lighthouse. The light was so brilliant, that from the farthest reaches to the farthest star, it looked like a thin streak of light on the night sky of whatever denizen of whichever star would gaze on either the day or night sky.
"Nuttingham, look!" said Lucky, as he looked upon the midnight sky from the secret spot. "There's a white line going across the night sky!"
"Looks like a shooting star." replied Nuttingham. "I've seen a lot of those."

999,969,884 words left.

Chapter 10: Prologue Finale

It was midnight in the secluded village. Not a single light shone beside that of the full moon. The secluded forest was even darker because the trees obscured a lot of the moonlight. However, Nuttingham has experience being in the forest at this time. It was so dark that the trees that surrounded the area were pitch black. You could not see anything from afar and being within the boundaries at this time was literally walking in blindly. The best course was to stay in the open clearing of the forest, though the best advice was not to be in the forest at all but when Nuttingham had that inkling for adventure, he could not resist the calling for adventure. Lucky, on the other hand, was the opposite.
"Why are we doing this at night?" Lucky asked. "Why can't we go in during the day?"
"Because I don't want anyone to find out."
"Why not?"
"If they find out I'm going inside a strange cave, they're going to get scared and close it up."
"Well I don't blame them. This is scary enough during the daytime, but nighttime is even worse!"
The two boys reached the hole where the cave was waiting on the bottom.
"It's so dark down there." said Lucky, "How are we supposed to see?"
"With this." Nuttingham pulled out a thick stick.
"A stick?"
"Yeah, but dipped in nut oil."
"Nut oil? What for?"
"We're going to make a torch." Nuttingham grabbed two rocks together, one was white while the other was black. He placed the end of the torch on top of a tree stump and proceeded to struck the white and black rocks together. Sparks were flying about and one of them landed on the torch, which lit up. Nuttingham quickly grabbed it before it spread to the trunk. Not that it would burn the trunk as the fire took some time before becoming strong but he was just being cautious. Nuttingham then proceeded to climb down the hole with torch in hand. After a few steps he jumped down to the bottom.
"Alright Lucky, come on!" he called. Lucky proceeded to follow.
"Why am I doing this again?" said Lucky.
"Come on, hurry up!" said Nuttingham excitedly. Lucky finally climbed down to the floor of the pit.
He caught his breath and looked around his surroundings. "AAAAAAAHHHHH! MONSTER!" he yelled. Apparently he spotted the statue of the Raccoon's head that was set on the opposite side of the cave's entrance. Nuttingham quickly put his hand over Lucky's mouth.
"Shhhh. Don't yell. We don't want to wake up the village." He then freed Lucky.
"MONSTER!" Lucky kept yelling, "THERE'S A MONSTER BEHIND YOU!"
"Oh that. No, that's not a monster. That's the rock I was telling you about! Isn't it amazing?"
Lucky then calmed down a bit and realized that it indeed it was not a real monster. "I...guess".
"Well, let's go."
"I...I can't. I can't do this. I'm too scared! I'm going back up!" Lucky proceeded to climb back up.
"Oh that's a shame. I guess all the treasure will belong to me then."
Once again, Lucky was in a fix, for he loved shiny things. He has never seen treasure before but he has heard tall tales from the village stories and the idea of treasure was something he wanted to see. "GRRR...alright, alright! But there better be treasure in there!" And thus, the two boys entered the cave.
Within the catacomb of the mysterious earthly cavity, it was completely black. Even during the day you could not see a thing for there was no way for light to enter. From what little light the torch provided, the entire cave was a perfect rectangle. Two walls, a ceiling, and a floor. As if this cave was manufactured, not naturally made. The walls were lined up with dirt and tree roots and the floor was pretty much the same. It was like this as the duo kept walking forward.
"Wow," said Nuttingham. "Look at this cave. It's so long!"
"How can you tell? It's completely black in front of us."
"Do you think this cave was dug by somebody?"

"Yeah, some kind of monster!"
"If there really is a monster, that will be awesome!"
"What do you mean awesome? If there's a monster down here, it'll eat us both up for sure."
"You don't know that. Maybe it's a friendly monster."
"Well I don't want to meet any monsters down here."
"Relax, there hasn't been any monsters yet."
"Yeah but you never know."
"Well in any case, it will still be cool to see one, right?"
"I...I...I don't know. I don't know! I just want to get this over with."
The duo kept on walking forward. Apparently the same scene has been playing on their eyes as nothing was changing aside from the scenery of the walls.
"Man, if I knew about this cave sooner, I would've checked it out sooner."
"Uhh...ye...yeah."
"Oh relax Lucky. This is the great adventure we've been waiting for."
"I was hoping our first adventure would take place during the daytime."
"Adventure waits for no one. I can't wait to see what's at the other end. Maybe this cave goes around the world."
"Don't talk crazy. The world is like a billion miles. There's no way a cave can be that long."
"Well we'll see about that."
"You're not seriously thinking this cave goes around the world, do you?" Lucky was starting to relax a bit.
"Why not?"
"Nuttingham, you have such crazy ideas on your head."
"That's because I'm an adventurer. Caves like these are nothing to me."
They kept on walking, with nothing changing at all. The trail was pretty much straightforward. Nuttingham did not keep track of time as he was content with the adventure of exploring the cave. However, Nuttingham started to look up in the ceiling. There was nothing to see up above them, and yet he kept on nudging his head up, as if something was calling him upwards, but he could not figure out why.
"How long have we been walking?" said Lucky, once again with fear in his voice.
"I don't know. I haven't been keeping track."
"What do you mean you haven't been keeping track? What if we get lost?"
"Lost? We've been going straightforward. There hasn't been a turn at all."
Lucky then looked behind him. "Oh no! I can't see the doorway!"
"Of course not. We're deep into the cave and it's too dark to see anything."
"Oh Nuttingham, this is enough, don't you think? Let's go back."
"No. I want to see what's at the end of this cave."
"Oh..."
The duo kept on walking with Nuttingham continuing to look up for reasons he could not explain. Now he had a feeling on his body. Something was doing strange things to Nuttingham. He felt a tremble and eagerness, but he did not know why. He just figured that he was just excited about the cave exploration, but at the same time, he felt that there was a message for him. That there was something he should notice. He thought and thought but he could not figure out for the life of him what that feeling was. Lucky, on the other hand, was watching his back, but unlike Nuttingham, he knew why he kept looking back: he wanted to leave.
"Nuttingham, I'm starting to change my mind."
"It's too late. We're already far into the cave."
"I don't care. I want to go back."
"We can't. I want to know what's at the end of this cave."
"I can't take it. The more we go in, the more scared I get."
"Calm down. There's nothing here. We've been walking for who knows how long and not even a cricket has been spotted."
"Yeah, now, but I have a feeling a monster's at the end of this cave. I can't do this, I got to go back."
"Well it doesn't matter because I got the torch and if you want to go back, you'll have to deal with the

darkness yourself."
"That's not fair, Nuttingham!"
"Well the choice is yours."
Lucky was angry at what Nuttingham said. "Fine. Then give me the torch."
"No way. I need this torch to explore the cave."
"Well I need it to get out of here."
"Too bad. This is the only torch and I'm not giving it to you."
"Oh yeah?" Lucky then tried to pounce Nuttingham down but Nuttingham saw this coming and moved out of the way. Lucky hit the wall and fell to the ground.
"Calm down Lucky. You are worrying too much." Just then, Nuttingham noticed something ahead of him: a wall. "Hey, look." he said. Apparently the duo finally reached the end. However, that is not what Nuttingham was referring to. "Oh my..." he exclaimed, for on the floor in front of the wall, there laid a chest.
"Nuttingham, what is that?"
"I think...I think that's a...what was it called...a treasure...chest?"
"What? A real treasure chest?"
"Yeah! That's right! All the stories that were told on the bonfire. I've heard them so many times. It must be it. It's a real treasure chest."
Nuttingham pierced the torch on the soil as he and Lucky inspected the chest.
"Oh my goodness," said Lucky, "I can't believe it! A real treasure chest."
"This is amazing! I can't believe it! A real treasure box."
"Come on, let's open it up."
"Yeah, let's see all the treasure. Oh man, this is exciting!" Nuttingham and Lucky tried to open it but it would not budge. "ARGH! How do you open this thing?"
"Didn't the stories say that you gotta use a...um...a thing."
"A key. Yeah, I remember now. They always locked these things with something called a key. Well where is the 'key' to this chest?"
"I don't know." The two boys looked around the surrounding area but could not find anything. They dug up the soil all around them but all they found was more dirt.
"Maybe the key is somewhere else." said Nuttingham.
"OH NO! I am not going to search the entire cave in the darkness." The two were puzzled at just how exactly to open the chest. "Oh great," said Lucky, "we discovered a treasure box but there is no way to open it. How are we going to get the treasure now?" Nuttingham then got an idea. He grabbed the chest and put it above his head. "Nuttingham, what are you doing?" Then, he flung the chest against the wall. It crashed and hit the floor. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? Why'd you did that for?"
"Well that's how I always open stuff."
"But you could've broken it!"
"Well, isn't that the point?"
Lucky shook his head at this but then he saw the chest. "Look. It's open."
The two boys scrambled towards the chest to see it's contents. "What is this?" Turns out the only thing on the chest was some kind of roll with a wooden stick in the middle and outer end. The sticks were nicely decorative however, as if they were designed to be held by the ends. "Is that the treasure? The stories said that it shined and stuff."
"Yeah, but...what is this? It feels like burlap." Nuttingham grabbed the end and unrolled it. "Wow, it's pretty long."
"Yeah. What's with this thing?"
Nuttingham looked on the roll and it turned out there was a drawing on it. Suddenly, his eyes widened, his jaw dropped and he was very still.
"Nuttingham? Nuttingham, what's wrong?" Lucky was now concerned about Nuttingham's behavior.
"Nuttingham? What's wrong? What's going on?"
"Bring the fire closer."
"What's going on? You're acting weird."

"Bring the light closer. I need to see this clearly!"
Lucky was starting to get scared but he complied. He grabbed the torch and brought it closer.
"Oh my goodness," Nuttingham said in an aspiring tone, "It is. IT IS!"
"What? What is it? What are you babbling about?"
"Lucky," Nuttingham turned to his companion, "this is a map. This is a map!"
"A what?"
"A MAP!" Nuttingham screamed, "IT'S REALLY A MAP!"
"AH!" This screaming took Lucky by surprise that he dropped the torch, however Nuttingham grabbed it before it fell to the ground. "Why'd you scream like that?"
"I'm sorry Lucky, but you don't understand. This is a map!"
"Well what is a map?"
"Lucky, don't you remember the stories? Maps are drawings of the surrounding lands."
"So?"
"SO!? Lucky, don't you understand what this means? It means that someone ventured outside into the world and drew this. We can get an idea of what the outside world looks like."
"But I wanted treasure."
Nuttingham held his new found map proudly as he looked on with wide eyes full of excitement. "This is better than treasure. This is the outside world!"
"Still...HEY!" Without warning, Nuttingham started to leave the cave with the torch in hand, leaving a scared Lucky behind in the darkness. "Where are you going? Wait for me!"

The night faded away and a new morning came and as soon as Doubt woke up, Nuttingham was at his doorway. He was so excited that he wanted to tell someone about the map. He chose Doubt, however, because he needed something answered.
"This map is really well made." said Doubt, "I'm surprised that you found this in a cave. It's really detailed. I'm amazed."
"Yeah, isn't it?" said Nuttingham, "But tell me, what is it a map of?"
"I think this is a map of this area."
"Really?"
"Yeah. See, I think this is the cliff were you found me."
The map was surprisingly detailed. It was almost realistic in its appearance. The map had all the major landmarks drawn in from the area. Of course no one in the secluded village ever left the village and Doubt was unfamiliar with the area so there was no way to confirm how accurate was the map. Regardless, Nuttingham was excited to have it.
"This is great!" Nuttingham said, "I feel like the entire world is in my hands!"
"Well, I don't think it's the entire world."
"Well maybe not but you know what I think. I think there are more of these maps out there."
"Oh really?"
"Yeah. Somebody must have wanted to draw a map of the world, but it was too big, so he hid the maps so he wouldn't lose them."
"Yeah, I guess that makes sense."
"White Raccoonham, I'm going to find these maps. I know there are more out there."
"You really think that?"
"Yeah. Who knows how many maps there are in the entire world."
"Don't you think this is the only map there is?"
"Nope."
"Why do you think that?"
"Like I said, the guy wanted to draw the entire world but he probably figured that it was too big to draw on a single roll, so he drew each piece of the map and buried them around the world. This might be the great adventure I've been waiting for."
Lucky gave a smirk, "Oh, I see. That's why."

"Huh?"
"You don't know if there are more maps, you just want to go on a adventure, don't ya?"
"Alright, alright, I don't know if there are more maps, but I have this map."
"You think they're going to let you go just because of this map?"
Nuttingham looked surprised. "How did you know that I have to get permission to leave?"
"The doctor told me that you have been craving an adventure for a long time."
"That blabber mouth. Yeah it's true. They won't let me leave the forest into the outside world because they say it's too dangerous. I'm hoping that if I show them that I have a map, that I won't get lost and that I can go home if I'm in danger."
"Well you know what Nuttingham, I think you should have the freedom to do whatever you want."
"You really think so?"
"Yeah. Why don't you tell the chief about this?"
"Yeah. I should do whatever I want, shouldn't I?"

"No."
"NO!? What do you mean no!?"
"Nuttingham, I've said it many times before; you cannot leave this forest. As the chief of this village-"
"But I got a map! I won't get lost and I can always come back!"
"No means no, Nuttingham. You can't leave the village."
"But that's not fair!"
"There are things in life that are not fair, Nuttingham, now cut out this nonsense."
"NO! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU! I HATE YOU!" Nuttingham bolted out in a infuriated manner. The chief however was not afflicted at all but Dawn was as she bore witness to all of this.
"He did found that map," said Dawn, "and Doubt did confirm that it was of this area."
"Stop it Dawn. I don't care if he does have a map of this area or the world. I'm not letting him leave right now. The boy just doesn't learn that he can't take care of himself yet."
"Well I'm still saying that we should let him go."
"And I keep telling you that I make the decisions here."
Suddenly, Doubt appeared on the scene. "Sure is a nice day, isn't it?"
"Doubt," asked chief, "do you feel any better?"
"Oh yes," answered back Doubt, "I feel much better."
"Doubt," asked Dawn, "what do you think of that map that Nuttingham brought you?"
"Dawn," said the chief, "leave him be."
"Oh that map," replied Doubt, "Why it was a fine map. Really well made."
"Well I'm curious to know where he found it." said the chief, "Did he tell you?"
"Uhh...No, he didn't." Apparently, Doubt made a promise to Nuttingham. No one in the village was allowed to break curfew unless there was some kind of event. Though Nuttingham could easily get away with it because he slept on the granary, which was his job to guard, so nobody would've noticed if he left for no one in the village was awake in the night except for the guards but they were near the wall, which were far away from the granary. Lucky, however, was far too young to live on his own so he had to live with his parents. If his parents found out what he did, he would get punished and Nuttingham did not want Lucky to be in trouble because of him.
"Well it's very odd that he found a map like that." said the chief.
"Village Chief," asked Doubt, "don't you think you should let him leave the village if he wants to?"
"No, I do not."
"But why?"
"Because it is dangerous. There are monsters out there and he would end up being eaten by them."
"Well he told me that he fought a giant spider when it came into this village."
"That was pure luck. He was injured during that battle."
"Yes but the fact that he drove away a giant spider should garner him merit to leave."
"Stop it. You're an outsider. You don't know what this forest is like."

"Maybe I don't but I 've been outside my area in Fireheart. If it's the same situation here, he'll be fine."
"I will still say no to the proposal. Now let the matter rest."
"Come on elder. It's too cruel to leave him here if he wants to leave."
"If I let him go all alone into those woods, I'll be leading him to danger."
"But if he's as strong as he says-"
"It's not just about being strong. He has not matured yet. He won't know how to handle dangerous situations."
"Oh...yeah. I did...notice that." It just occurred to Doubt that, even though Nuttingham was of age for a raccoon, he was a squirrel and it takes a lot more time to mature for a squirrel than a raccoon and he did notice his childish demeanor. "Well...in that case...how about he comes with me?"
"What? You?" both the chief and Dawn were surprised by this.
"Yeah. After all, I feel a lot better now and I'll be going home eventually. He can come with me and explore the world."
"Such a proposition coming from a stranger?"
"I know it's too upfront, but I've taken a liking to his passion for adventure. I actually feel sorry for him."
"I don't know about this."
"This is a good opportunity." said Dawn, "He's been to the outside world, so he knows his way around."
"Yeah." said Doubt, "I can keep an eye on him. What do you say, chief?"
"I'll admit," said the chief, "it does sound good, and I do wish for the boy to do as he wishes, but I'm still doubtful. How do I know he'll be safe?"
"Don't you worry. As long as he's with me, he'll be perfectly safe with me."
"Well one thing does worry me. What about your mission?"
"Mission?"
"Yes. You said you were on a mission, didn't you?"
"Mission? What mission?"
"You just told us yesterday that you had to stop some kind of monster."
"I don't remember saying such a thing."
"But you did. You said that there was some kind of monster that was going to destroy the world. I can't remember what you called it."
"Well whatever that was, it doesn't matter. The important thing is that I wish for Nuttingham to explore the world."
The chief thought for a moment. He did not anticipate this offer and it did sounded like a good idea. However he still had his doubts. "I'll have to think about this."

"So here you are, Nuttingham."said Lucky. Nuttingham was sitting on the rock of the secret spot, sulking.
"Leave me alone."
"What's wrong?"
"I'm never going to leave this village, ever."
"What do you mean? What are you talking about?"
"The Village Elder refused to let me leave, even though I have a map. He wants to keep me here forever. I hate this."
"But he's always said that."
"But this time it's different. Interesting things have been happening lately and I can't be a part of it. With White Raccoonham and the cave and the map and I can't do anything about it."
"Don't think like that Nuttingham. You'll be able to leave someday."
"No I wont. Nothing is going to convince the Village Elder." Nuttingham then stood up with a stern look on his face. "I should just leave on my own. Just sneak out of here."
"You can't do that!"
"Why not?"
"Because you'll get in trouble."
"That's why I would be sneaking out. So they won't find out."
"But you've tried many times and you've always failed."

"Well that's my problem. I gave up too easily. I'll try again. And again. And again and again and again until I leave this place forever!"
"No Nuttingham! Don't just leave like that!"
Nuttingham then fell onto the ground on his knees, "I'm so frustrated! I...I...I don't know what to do now!"
Lucky put his hand on Nuttingham's shoulders, trying to comfort him. "Cheer up Nuttingham. How about you go talk to the white raccoon. That might make you feel better."
Nuttingham looked up at Lucky. "Yeah, that might help me feel better." The two boys headed back to the secluded village. As they finally made it to the border between the village and the forest, there waiting was Dawn and the Village Elder.
"Look," said Dawn to the chief, "Nuttingham is here." The two walked towards the disgruntled squirrel. The village chief was the last person he wanted to see right now.
"Nuttingham," said Dawn, "there you are. We have something important to tell you."
Nuttingham was not in the mood to talk with the chief or his sister. "Leave me alone, I don't want to talk to the Village Elder."
"Listen to us for a moment."
"I said leave me alone. I just want to talk to White Raccoonham."
"You don't understand-"
"I know what you are going to say." Nuttingham was starting to get discontent with his sisters meddling. "I don't want to hear it."
"We've decided to let you go." interrupted the chief.
"Wha...what?" Nuttingham was blindsided by this. In fact, he probably didn't hear the chief correctly.
"I said that we have decided to let you leave the village, Nuttingham."
Those words. The words that Nuttingham has been dying to hear for all of his known life. It has finally been uttered in truthfulness by the chief, the very one who has kept him in the village. However, Nuttingham was in complete disbelief and still a bit confused.
"Are...are you serious?" asked Nuttingham.
"Yes. I've have come to a decision to allow you to explore."
It was confirmed. The chief had given his blessing to let the young squirrel leave. There was no room for doubt anymore.
"Y...ye...ye...YES! YES! OH THANK YOU! OH THANK YOU!" Nuttingham jumped for joy. He hopped, skipped and continued to do so. His ecstasy was so great, it would reach the heavens.
"Now settle down, Nuttingham. Before you get too excited, we're not allowing you to freely roam by your own. You'll be going with Doubt."
"Oh yes, yes." this news did not extinguish his joy, as long as he could leave the village, he would do anything asked of him. "I'll follow him. I'll follow him good."
"Of course, but there is also another condition that you must agree upon."
"What is it?"
"I'm allowing you to leave this village and explore, but you are only allowed to go as far as Doubt takes you. Doubt is going to fight off some monster but I don't want you involved. As soon as he goes home, he's going to get on a ship and prepare to battle, but he will drop you off before he reaches the monster. Do you-"
"YES!" Nuttingham wasted no time. He darted through the village, shouting in delight. "I can't believe it! It's finally happening! I'm going on an adventure!"
"Wait Nuttingham," the chief was chasing after the squirrel, "there is still much to discuss."
Nuttingham finally reached the doctor's shack where Doubt was recuperating in. "White Raccoonham! White Raccoonham!" Nuttingham ran up to Doubt. "Did you hear the news!?"
"Yeah, I've heard you yelling it just now."
"I can't believe it! It's finally happening! I'm finally going to explore the world! White Raccoonham, I'm going to be joining you!"
"Yeah, I know. I'm the one who suggested it."
"You did?"
"Yeah. I felt bad that you were forced to stay here, so I convinced the chief that you should come with me."

"Well this is great! I'll be able to do all the things you did!"
"Now hold on Nuttingham. All that stuff that happened to me were accidents. We got to be careful when we leave. There's danger out there, you know."
"Oh yeah! I'm ready for anything." As Nuttingham said all this, the chief, Dawn, and Lucky were listening from the outside.
"I can't believe it." said Lucky, "Nuttingham is finally leaving the village."
"Yeah." replied Dawn, "It's rather...sudden, isn't it?" She turned her head to the chief. "Thank you, Village Elder."
"Don't thank me, Dawn." said the chief, "As I've said, I've always wanted him to leave this village."
"But you've always rejected and said no every time me and Nuttingham asked you."
"As I've said, it was because he wasn't mature yet to deal with the dangers of the outside world. But Doubt seems to be mature enough to handle himself. I figured that Nuttingham can learn from him while they travel."
"So that's why you agreed." said Lucky.
"Though I fear something will happen to the young lad, I believe that Doubt will help him along his way to maturity."
"Well I'm just so happy that Nuttingham will finally leave the village as he always wanted." said Dawn.
"Yeah." said Lucky, "When he comes back, he's going to have a million stories to tell us about his adventures."
"Whoever said he's going to come back?" said the chief in a grim tone.
"What?" said Lucky in shock.
Dawn followed "But you said-"
"I know what I said, but you don't think he's actually going to follow my instructions, do you?"
"What?" said Lucky, "You're kidding. He has to come back, right Dawn?"
"I'm afraid to say this, " said Dawn, "but the Village Elder may be right."
"What? Why?"
"Think about it for a moment. Nuttingham has always had the desire to explore. I don't think he's going to stop where Doubt lives. He's going to attempt to explore the entire world."
"No. NO!" Lucky was now in a desperate mood. "Doubt will stop him! You told him that, right Chiefham?"
"I told him to keep an eye out on him but I doubt Doubt can watch him all day and all night. Nuttingham will sneak out eventually. Even if he manages to stick with Doubt throughout the entire journey, Nuttingham will realize that it will be time to go home and leave Doubt before he can be delivered back. And Doubt himself, even he feels that Nuttingham has a desire to adventure. If Nuttingham so chooses, Doubt would probably agree to parting ways."
"So...this means..." Lucky was now almost close to tears, "this is the last time we'll be seeing Nuttingham?"
"I'm afraid so." said Dawn.
"If you have anything to say to him," said the chief, "say it to him before tomorrow at high noon. That is when he will depart."
"Tomorrow!?" said Lucky. "Why so soon? I want to spend more time with him!"
"Be quiet. Here he comes." Then out of the shack, Nuttingham stepped out.
"Did you speak with Doubt?" asked Dawn.
"Yeah!" said Nuttingham, "We're ready to go! So long everyone!"
"Hold on," said the chief, "you're not leaving yet."
"Not yet?"
"The doctor said Doubt will be fully recovered tomorrow, so you will have to wait till then."
"Aw, I was excited about leaving right now."
"Nuttingham," Lucky suddenly barged in front of Nuttingham, "you got to promise to come back!"
"Lucky!" responded Dawn at this outburst from Lucky.
"Promise me you'll come back!" pleaded Lucky, "Don't leave forever!"
"That's enough Lucky!" Dawn was now pulling Lucky away as Nuttingham watched at this display.
Lucky continued with his pleadings. "Please don't go! Don't go! Stay here with us!"

"Lucky! That's enough! Knock it off!" Dawn kept on pulling Lucky away, trying to calm him down until eventually they were out of sight.
"Wow." said Nuttingham, "I didn't realize just how much I meant to lucky."
"Not just him, Nuttingham." spoke the chief, "Everyone feels the same way."
"Even you?"
"Of course I do. You are a part of this village as much as the next. The only reason why I never allowed you to leave is because I was scared that you were going to get hurt and I could do nothing about it. But I know, deep in my heart, that I can't keep you here forever. It's time I let you go."
"Thanks, Village Elder."
"Now go home and get ready."
"Ready? For what?"
"For your party of course. We are going to celebrate the last day you will spend with us in this village."
Meanwhile, not too far away. "Lucky!" scolded Dawn, "What is the matter with you?"
"You heard what Chiefham said." said Lucky, "Nuttingham is going away forever!"
"Yeah, I heard him. But you shouldn't have acted that way in front of Nuttingham."
"But aren't you sad that he is never coming back?"
"Of course," Dawn soothe her voice, "but that doesn't mean I'm going to cry about it. You know he's always wanted to leave this village. It's only natural he'd want to explore a little more." She got down on one knee and put her hand on Lucky's shoulder. "Look, Lucky, Nuttingham is probably never coming back, but that doesn't mean he hates us. He's going to miss us too."
"Really?"
"Sure. He might miss us so much, that he might even send us a gift."
"How is he going to do that?"
Dawn didn't thought about this. She just blurted it out trying to make Lucky feel better. "Well...Doubt will probably come back to visit us and send us a message from him. Are you feeling better?"
"No!" said Lucky frustratingly. He still wanted Nuttingham to stay. He always knew Nuttingham wanted to leave the village but he never figured it was actually going to happen. He probably assumed that Nuttingham was going to live in the village forever. The reality of the situation was a crash he was not prepared for.
"Don't let it get to you Lucky. Wouldn't you rather spend the last day with Nuttingham rather than crying?"
"Yeah...I guess."
"Well we are having a party in honor of Nuttingham. How about you help us."
Lucky suddenly was brimming with life. "A party? OH BOY!"
"That's the spirit." And the two went off to help prepare for the festivities. Meanwhile, Nuttingham went back to the doctors shack.
"Did you hear that White Raccoonham? They're giving me a party tonight!"
"That sounds nice."
"I can't believe this is all happening to me!"
"I'm very happy for you Nuttingham."
"This is all happening so fast. Oh man. I can't wait to see what's out there in the world. I wonder what I will discover." His excitement started to boil up again. He started to jump up and down with joy. "Oh how I wish tomorrow will come already! I want to go explore now!"
"Don't be in too much of a rush, Nuttingham."
"What do you mean?"
"Don't forget, everyone in this village is going to miss you when you leave. Perhaps you should spend time with them."
Nuttingham calmed down a bit "Oh that's right. I got so excited, I forgot about how everyone feels."
"You only have one more day left. Perhaps you should spend this last day with them."
"Yeah. Today should be about all my friends. But what about you, White Raccoonham?"
"Don't worry about me. After all, we'll have more than enough time when we are exploring."
"No, I mean you should spend time with them too."
"Well the doctor says I should spend all this time resting and recover for the long journey ahead."

"The Long and Exciting Journey!"
"Ha ha. Yeah, I guess. But I'll be at the party later tonight, so go ahead and enjoy yourself."
With this Nuttingham agreed and left Doubt to rest. After all that has happened, his excitement has finally calmed down enough to realize that he should spend the last day with the village, and so he did. He helped out with the last day of chores, he played with Lucky in the secluded village to finish the adventure against the evil crab, he and Dawn went out to pick fruit for the festivities, and he helped carry the barrels full of fruit juices, for today it was all about the village. Soon enough, the night finally came and the celebrations were about to start. A bonfire was lit and everyone gathered to the area where they would usually be when it was time to tell stories. But tonight, they gathered for the beginning of a new tale starring Nuttingham the Squirrel.
The chief stepped forward in front of the crowd. "Tonight, we are celebrating the depart of our beloved citizen, Nuttingham, who has been a part of this community for many years. Tomorrow, he will leave this village to explore the world that we have been hiding from for so long. Nuttingham, would you like to say a few words?"
Nuttingham stepped forward. "Thanks everyone for this great party. I'm so excited about exploring the world, but I'm not going to forget-"
All of a sudden, out of nowhere, a giant flash of light appeared. It engulfed not just the party but the entire village and the secluded forest, and probably beyond that. The light was so strong, no one could see anything. But just as quickly as it came, it disappeared. It couldn't have lasted longer than 3 seconds.
"WHOA!"
"What happened?"
"What was that?"
"What was that light?"
Nuttingham regained his eyesight. "Man, today is full of surprises."
A few moments have passed and everyone seemed to regain their eyesight.
"Should we look into it?" asked Dawn.
"Don't be foolish." said the doctor, "It could be dangerous."
"Besides," said Forest Fire, "it looks like it took place outside the village."
"In that case," suggested Nuttingham, "I'll look into it."
"Don't be crazy." said Lucky, "Its scary out there."
"Don't worry," said Nuttingham, "I'll take White Raccoonham with me."
"No way!" said Doubt, "It's way too dark out there."
"Enough of it." spoke the chief, "Let's not let that spoil our party. Let us all enjoy ourselves tonight for it is Nuttingham's last day with us."
Everyone agreed to this notion.
"Okay," said Nuttingham, "I'll look into it tomorrow." And with that, the party began. Everyone started to celebrate. For this special occasion, the chief told stories, one raccoon started to sing folksongs and everyone danced, they all played games, ate the fruit that was picked, and drank the juice from the barrels. Everyone was having a good time, especially Nuttingham, who knew deep in his heart that, even though he was anxious to adventure, he knew he was going to miss the secluded village.

The sun shone brightly on the top of the sky. Everyone in the village gathered at the east wall. The gates that were closed for centuries, they were now opened for the first and final time. The gates were so old, they were lost in the vines that grew over them and no one, not even the village elder, knew of them. They thought they were going to have to break the wall in order to make an entrance, but luckily the gardener was chopping off the vines that were directly in front of the gate, so the wall was spared. The gate was rusted shut and they could not open it, so they decided to break down the gate doors. Since no one was going to leave the village sans Nuttingham, there was no need for this gate to exist anyway so they were planning on blocking the path as soon as Nuttingham left. Everyone, including Nuttingham who helped with the breaking of the gate, were present when the opening was made. When the gates were pulled down, the villagers witnessed the sight they were never going to see, ever again: the outside. There wasn't much to see however: a corridor of trees lined up with a pathway that lead forward as far as they could see. It appeared that at one point, this village was

open to the world. Everyone watched in amazement but not one dared to step forward. Nuttingham's eyes glowed as he witnessed a sight he has always wanted. That was all in the morning. Now it was high noon and Nuttingham was ready to go.
"Oh what's keeping the Village Elder?" said Nuttingham, "It's high noon already."
"Calm down Nuttingham," said Dawn, "We stayed up all night and the Village Elder isn't young anymore."
"Look!" said Nuttingham as he witnessed the chief walking forward, "There he is!"
The chief finally made it to the departing. "Village Elder," said Dawn, "You shouldn't get up this early. You should rest."
"I would not miss this moment for anything." said the chief, "Nuttingham, you are finally leaving this village, aren't you?"
"Yeah." replied Nuttingham, "I couldn't sleep all night long. I was just so excited! I can't believe I'm finally going to explore the world! I feel...so tired!"
"Come on, Nuttingham." poked Doubt, "It's your big day. Show a little more enthusiasm."
"Oh yeah." Nuttingham stood up straight again.
"Nuttingham," said Dawn, "I have something I want to tell you."
"What is it, Dawn?"
"I didn't had a chance yesterday but I think it's important you should know." Nuttingham was not expecting this. He embraced himself to whatever it was Dawn was going to tell him. "Nuttingham, you are not a raccoon."
Nuttingham suddenly was puzzled. "What are you talking about?"
"I know you think you are one but in truth, you are actually a squirrel."
"A what?" Nuttingham was even more confused.
The chief intervened "Yes, it's true. You are not one of us. You are an entirely different species."
"You actually thought you were a raccoon?" said Doubt, as he found this both amusing and strange at the same time.
"Wait a moment." said Nuttingham, "What is this all of a sudden? What do you mean I'm not one of you? Why didn't anyone tell me this sooner? Why are you telling me now?"
"We didn't figure it would matter." said the chief, "We've always believed that you were going to live with us for a long time."
"Yeah," said Dawn, "it was no big deal."
"What do you mean no big deal?" Nuttingham said, who apparently did not accept the situation. "All my life, I've been told I was a raccoon. Now you are telling me I'm not?"
"Sorry Nuttingham," said Dawn, "We didn't want to make you feel lonely."
"Are you sure you aren't mistaken?"
"Well think about it. I mean, haven't you noticed you run faster than all of us?"
"I was told that was a special ability I had."
"You never thought about why you had red fur?" asked Forest Fire.
"I was told I spent too much time in the sun!"
"What about your big, bushy tail?" asked the doctor.
"I was told that it's what made me special!" Nuttingham took a small pause, then he continued, "So...if I'm this squirrel thing you mentioned, then why am I living with raccoons?"
"That is a good question." said the chief. "You see, Nuttingham, one day, we heard a monster right outside of the wall. It was a startling noise of some beast attacking. Suddenly, a big white ball made out of cloth was flung onto our village. We ran towards it and unwrapped it and we found you as a baby inside it. We have no idea who left you or why. We decided to take you in as one of our own and gave you the name Nutting, as that is what your kind eat."
"Then...that means my parents are somewhere out there?"
"Precisely." said Dawn, "This is why I wanted to tell you. You're family could be out there."
"My family? But...you're my family."
"I feel the same way, but I'm just saying that you should take this chance to look for your parents." This new revelation came as a shock to Nuttingham. He was speechless as was the village.

"I knew it was a bad idea to wait until now." said a random raccoon.
"We should've told him earlier." said another.
"No, no..." said Nuttingham, "It's fine...I understand now." All that was said to him had now settled in. "So my real family is somewhere out there. Actually...this is great! This is turning out into a great adventure already!"
The entire village started to laugh, including Doubt. "There's the typical Nuttingham attitude." said Dawn.
After a good hearty laugh, Dawn then said "But seriously, Nuttingham, I hope that you find your family along your travels."
"Oh I will. I will search far and wide for them."
"That's the spirit." said the chief, "I'm sure your family will welcome you as much as we have."
"Yeah, this is getting exciting!"
"Now then," said the chief, "Now that we have settled that, it's time to say our last farewells. Nuttingham, the time has come for you to finally live out your dream to explore the world. But never forget your humble beginnings in our small village."
Then Lucky said "Nuttingham, no matter where you are going, always remember us. You can always come back whenever you feel homesick or you just want to take a break."
Then Dawn said "That's right, we'll always be here whenever you want to come back. We'll always welcome you with open arms, Nuttingham. Even though you are a squirrel, you'll always be welcomed in our village as one of our own."
And finally Nuttingham said "Thanks guys. You mean so much to me. Let's hope that someday we will meet again and I can tell you guys the stories of our adventure out in the open world."
"I guess that's everything." said Doubt, "Are you ready Nuttingham?"
"Yeah! Let's go!" And thus, with those words, the two stepped out of the gate. The crowd started waving and shouting their farewells as Nuttingham looked behind and waved back. He kept on waving and they kept on saying their farewells as Nuttingham and Doubt walked the corridor of trees. Nuttingham and Doubt were getting smaller as were the crowd to Nuttingham as they kept on walking forward until there came a point where both parties were small dots, and then finally, they vanished from sight. The crowd that waved Nuttingham goodbye was now silent for a moment. And then "Wow, so that's it." said a commoner. "He's really gone."
"Yeah," said another, "It's strange, isn't it."
The chief started walking back to the village.
"Well, I'm pretty tired from the party last night. I'm going back to sleep." Not too long, the rest followed.
"Things won't be the same, right?"
"You got that right."
"Well who gets his house?"
"That's not his house. That's the granary."
And in no time, the villagers began their daily task. However there was one raccoon who continued to stand where she was#awn. She stood there, staring at the corridor of trees that Nuttingham has passed through, into the wild world that she did not want to go. Even if she longed for Nuttingham already, she knew she could never step out of the forest.
"Good bye, little brother." With this, she turned around and walked away to begin her daily duties.

999,962,158 words left.

And thus ends the prologue. My how long it took, but that is nothing compared to the overall goal. To those who have read up to this point, I thank you sincerely but this is only the beginning. The prologue barely scratched the surface with a almost measly 40,000 words. That isn't nearly one percent of a billion words. So you are probably wondering why is the goal of this story one billion words? Well it all started back in around 2010 when I wanted to make a comic strip. However, I wanted something unique to set it apart. I decided that the comic would have a goal of 1 million strips and managed to make 200 of them in a course of a year, which was the prologue that you just read, but each strip took so long to make, even when the comic was as simple as could be. I decided to quit the comic strip eventually but the idea of a long adventure was still with me

because I love adventuresome stories that have the heroes journey to new and exotic places. Come 2013 and I decided to work on the idea once again. I decided to try my hands at making a video of it. I was ready to get to work but then I remembered that I once discovered online fiction. I decided to try and make the story into a narrative instead and I managed to finish the first chapter. I based it on the comic that I drew long ago and turns out that what took 14 strips easily translated to 1 chapter of text. It was great and I decided that this story was now going to be a novel. However, the goal of a million strips had to transfer as well because it was what made it unique. After some thought, I figured that 1 billion words was just right for a long narrative.
Now you may be thinking why even bother making a word limit. Could I not just make the story without one? Yes, it's true but I want to make a very, very, very long journey. A journey full of adventure, suspense, thrills, and I want it to last as long as possible. But at the same time, I do not want it to drag on and on that it feels like it's going nowhere. That is why there is a word limit. Not only does this assure me that there is an apparent goal that must be reached so that the story has no time to hang but it also creates anticipation. As the story progresses, the numbers will chip away little by little. The adventure will prolong but there is also the counter ticking down, giving a sense of mystery but at the same time, assurance that the story has a goal to meet and that will create tension in trying to figure out how the adventure will unfold as the numbers begin to drop. That is my ultimate goal with this story.
So that is all I have to say. I hope you stick around and see how Nuttingham's adventures unfold and what awaits him in the one billion word challenge.

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