

RADICAL FAITH
PLANET HOPE

K.F. McDaniel

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RADICAL FAITH – Planet Hope

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To Mary McDaniel, Rest in Peace

Book Two

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ARCHIVE ONE – Safe Haven

I. Dolores Live

Scarlett

Hurry mom. I want to get a good spot.

Narrator

There are thousands of people in the streets in anticipation for the Dolores concert. Dolores is a huge celebrity. She attracts large crowds wherever she goes. Her concert tickets sell out in minutes. This concert is sold out. The concert does not begin until tomorrow, but people are camping in the streets hoping to spot Dolores as she enters the concert hall. Dolores used to seem nice. Over the years, Dolores has, sadly, become vulgar and tasteless. Young girls are attracted to Dolores' rebellious image. Most of Dolores' fans are girls who are thirteen years old or younger. Sophina remembers how her mother disliked her favorite band. She tries to be understanding even though she dislikes Scarlett's favorite band.

Sophina

I am on my way.

Narrator

Sophina grabs her purse and heads out the door. She jumps in the space pod. Scarlett is so excited that she forgets to put her seatbelt on. Sophina reminds her, and she straps it on. They drive to the concert hall and find a spot to set up.

Scarlett

Let us set up here. This is a good spot.

Sophina

Okay.

Narrator

Sophina sets up two chairs, a picnic blanket, an ice chest, and a small roof.

Sophina

What time is the concert?

Scarlett

It starts at seven o'clock tomorrow.

Sophina

Does everyone come out this early?

Scarlett

A lot of people do. Just look at how many people are out here. There are thousands of people. By coming early, you have a chance to meet Dolores and get her autograph.

Sophina

What time do they open the hall?

Scarlett

I am not sure.

Sophina

I am going to ask the policeman. Excuse me officer.

Officer

How can I help you?

Sophina

Do you know what time the hall opens tomorrow?

Officer

The hall will open at 18:00 hours.

Scarlett
You have a nice badge.

Officer
Thank you.

Scarlett
What does it say?

Officer
It says serve and protect.

Narrator
Officer kneels down so Scarlett can get a closer look at his badge.

Scarlett
What does it mean by Champion?

Officer
Champion is my name.

Scarlett
You have a cool name. It fits you very well.

Champion
I am glad you think so.

II. Surprise Guests

Scarlett

Mom, look!

Narrator

Large space ships begin descending upon the planet. They fire at everything that moves. People are running everywhere. The planet is overwhelmed by the alien weaponry. It is clear that the planet will be doomed. Sophina and Scarlett follow Champion inside the concert hall.

Sophina

What are we going to do?

Champion

We need to find an alien command center.

Sophina

Where are we going to find an alien command center?

Champion

We have to sneak into an alien space craft. Do you know how to use a gun?

Sophina

No. I have never had to use a gun.

Champion

That is okay. Just stay close to me.

Narrator

Champion cracks the concert hall door open and looks outside. People are being vaporized by alien lasers.

Champion

Let us try the back door.

Narrator

The group runs to the back door. An alien space craft has landed in the street. Four ten foot tall aliens emerge from the space craft. They begin vaporizing people. Three of the aliens advance. One alien stays back to protect the ship and starts walking back inside the ship.

Champion

This is my chance.

Narrator

Champion charges at the alien while shooting. The alien drops and falls near the front door.

Champion

Come on.

Narrator

Sophina and Scarlett catch up with Champion. They have to climb over the alien to get inside the ship. Scarlett trembles with fear as she is forced to climb over the alien.

Scarlett

Is the alien still alive?

Champion

This way.

Narrator

Champion leads them to the command center, but there is a problem. The command center has four aliens working the controls.

Champion
Stay here.

Narrator

Champion now has a gun in each hand. He turns and begins firing at the aliens in the command center. They fire back. He jumps behind a control panel to take cover. He throws a flash grenade, and it stuns the aliens. As the flash grenade explodes, Champion dives over the control panel and kills all four aliens. Sophina and Scarlett run inside to meet Champion.

Champion
I thought I told you...

Narrator

An alien chases after Sophina and Scarlett. It snatches Scarlett and pulls her toward its mouth.

Sophina
Scarlett.

Narrator

Sophina uses her elbow to break the glass axe holder. She pulls the axe out and strikes the alien in the head. The alien turns around and strikes Sophina. Sophina falls to the ground. The alien removes the axe from its head and continues trying to shove Scarlett in its mouth. Champion runs toward the alien and jumps on its face. The alien drops Scarlett. It attempts to consume Champion instead. Champion shoots the alien multiple times, yet the alien does not appear to be hurt. Sophina gets off the ground and gets the axe. This time, she strikes the alien in the center of the back. The alien lets Champion go. As the alien lets him go, it sounds the alarm.

Champion

We have to get out of here.

Narrator

The group follows Champion through the door. They look to the left and see dozens of aliens running their way. They look to the right and see another dozen aliens running their way.

Champion

Watch out.

Narrator

Champion shoots the door in front of them and kicks it open.

Champion

Get in.

Narrator

They run inside the door and lock it behind them. The aliens bang at the door and attempt to enter.

Champion

The door will not hold long.

Narrator

They see hundreds of alien space cycles. They have two wheels. The front wheel is ten times larger than the back wheel and is yellow. The back wheel is very small and is black. The front is shaped like an arrow. They are equipped with jet powered engines. A glass dome covers the passenger compartment. There are hundreds of buttons, sensors, monitors, and controls.

Sophina

Do you know how to operate one of these things?

Champion

Not yet.

Narrator

The aliens burst through the door.

Champion

Come on.

Narrator

The group jumps on the alien space cycle. Champion turns it on. The aliens are only a few feet away.

Sophina

How do we get out?

Champion

There is only one way to find out.

Narrator

Champion accelerates.

Sophina

What are you doing? We are going to slam right into the wall.

Scarlett

Champion, what are you doing?

Champion

Hold on.

Narrator

The group races down the ship hanger. Once the alien space cycle reaches the end, the ship hanger opens and the group flies out.

Sophina

How did you know it would open?

Champion

I did not.

Scarlett

You almost killed us.

Champion

We need to get off this planet. I know the perfect place.

Sophina

Where?

Champion

It is called Stanton Island. It is a small planet that is off the radar. It has been used as a refuge for hundreds of years. It is a safe haven.

Narrator

The alien space cycle is only designed to seat one person. It is not built to safely transit three people. It is certainly not built to safely transit three people intergalactically. The group has no choice. They are surrounded by aliens. It is their only hope. Champion sets the course for Stanton Island. Their space cycle launches into space. The aliens do not follow them into space because they know the group cannot make it very far. Instead, the aliens track the group on the large screen monitor at the command center.

Champion

I think we are being tracked.

Sophina

How can you be sure?

Champion

I just have a gut feeling. The aliens will come after us once we arrive at our destination.

Sophina

What do we do?

Champion

I have an idea, but it is dangerous.

Sophina

What other choice do we have? Let us try your idea.

Champion

Okay. Hold on.

Narrator

The group is flying at warp speed. Within one hour, they arrive near Stanton Island and make a dive straight for the planet. The dive interrupts the alien tracking device. All engines are at full throttle. The group rips through Stanton Island's atmosphere and slams right into a steaming river. The alien space cycle is destroyed, but the tracking device is destroyed along with it. The aliens lose the signal and cannot tell where the group is. The group slowly crawls out of the river. There are abandoned canoes near the group's point of entry. They each climb into a canoe. The group is distressed, but they are relieved that they were able to escape.

Champion

We should be safe here. This is a refuge. I know about it only because I used to be in the military. We need to paddle up stream.

Narrator

The river is steamy and a dense fog sits on it, making it difficult to see. The group arrives on land. They cheer as they have made it to safety. They have escaped the aliens. They spot several houses in the distance and proceed onward. A strong stench covers the air. The stench gets stronger as they approach the houses. As they walk through the small neighborhood, the place looks abandoned. Trash is everywhere. It looks like a swamp. The group presses through the stench and the fog. They come to a part in the road that is slightly broken. One can see underneath the road. The group sees a giant alien. They try to stay calm. They carefully press on.

Champion

This place looks different than I remember.

Narrator

They come to another strange structure. There are two ditches. Each ditch is two hundred feet from the other. Fog covers the center of the ditch so one cannot see clearly to the bottom. In the center of each ditch is what appears to be a giant fifty foot statue. There is no head. As the group gets closer, it becomes clear that they are not statues. They are headless mannequins in police uniforms.

Sophina

This place is safe, right?

Champion

It used to be.

Narrator

As the group gets closer, they hear the screams and moans of what sounds like humans. They see an alien space craft. Before they can take cover, they are snatched by a giant alien police officer. The officer drags them down the ditch. As they are being dragged, they see humans in poor condition. They look beaten, starved, and terrified. The group is thrown into a dark prison cell and locked in.

III. Welcome to Stanton Island

Champion
Is everyone okay?

Sophina
I think so.

Narrator
Scarlett does not respond.

Sophina
Scarlett!

Narrator
Sophina shouts.

Scarlett
I think the police officer broke my arm mom.

Narrator
Sophina's heart begins to race. She rushes to check on Scarlett.

Champion
Let me see.

Narrator
Champion examines Scarlett's arm. Scarlett appears to be in excruciating pain.

Sophina
Is she okay?

Champion

Her shoulder is dislocated. I can relocate it, but it is going to hurt.

Narrator

Scarlett squeezes Sophina's hand as she prepares to have her shoulder relocated.

Champion

She should bite down on something. We do not want to draw any attention to ourselves. The guards are not too far away.

Narrator

Sophina offers her shirt, and Scarlett bites down hard. Scarlett's eyes are closed shut. The pain is becoming unbearable. Champion swiftly snaps her shoulder back into place. Scarlett's breathing slows. Their attention is refocused by the sound of keys. An alien guard opens the prison cell and seizes Scarlett and Champion.

Scarlett

Mom!

Sophina

Scarlett!

Narrator

Sophina tries to free her daughter, but the alien is too strong.

Sophina

Let my daughter go. Where are you taking them?

Narrator

Scarlett calls out for her mother. She screams and cries hysterically. Champion is an Omegan by blood. The alien

did not anticipate a person of his strength. Champion wrestles with the alien and subdues him.

Champion
Get his keys.

Narrator
Scarlett procures the alien's keys.

Champion
How do we get out of here?

Narrator
The alien abstains. Champion tightens his grip.

Champion
I am not going to ask you again.

Sophina
He probably does not understand our language.

Narrator
The alien turns his head to Sophina.

Alien
I understand your language perfectly. We invented your language.

Narrator
The alien larks hideously.

Alien
There is no escape. Even if you escape the prison, you will undoubtedly be killed by a tree hopper or police patrol or both.

Champion

We will take our chances. How do we get out of here?

Alien

I am not afraid of you.

Champion

I will kill you unless you talk.

Scarlett

Please do not kill him Champion.

Alien

Scarlett, you are a fool. You will be the first to die.

Sophina

No she will not. Do not ever speak to my daughter.

Champion

Get in the cell. You will be spending the night in here.

Narrator

Champion shoves the alien into the prison cell and locks the door. The group runs to an exit. The exit is equipped with sensors. At least one alien must exit along with a prisoner. If not, the alarm is triggered.

Alarm

Eee. Eee.

Champion

We must have triggered the alarm. We have to hurry.

Narrator

They make a run for an exit straight ahead. When they open the exit, they are without words. They are viewing

the inside of a mother ship space craft. It is as large as a small town. Humans are being whipped and forced to repair it. The mother ship is underground just below the prison. Thousands of humans are working as slaves.

Sophina

How are we supposed to get out of here?

Aliens

You are not.

Narrator

They say as they zap Sophina, Champion, and Scarlett with a syper. The shot knocks them out cold. When they awake, they are strapped to white chairs in a large room. There are hundreds of rows of chairs. Each chair has a person strapped to it. Above the chairs, there are white helmets. An alien stands at a high podium in the center of the room.

ARCHIVE TWO – Human Programming

I. Three Strikes

Alien

Many of you are wondering why you are here. The answer is simple. You are here because you are an inferior species. We are the Saxons. We are here to improve your lives.

Narrator

The Saxon people vary in size and ability. The Saxons have strategically altered their DNA to produce exactly three different offspring: Titan; Echelon; and Strata. Titans are giant fierce warriors. Echelons are hyper intelligent. Stratas are a cross between Titan and Echelon. Saxons have grey skin, two arms, and two legs. Saxons are hairless, and every Saxon is born with a body mark. No body mark is the same. Their body marks are blue and cover their entire body. They look like intricate tattoos. Their hands and feet are slightly webbed. Saxons are vegetarians by choice, but they will eat meat if necessary. The Saxon, speaking at the podium, is an Echelon Saxon.

Echelon

Removing hope from your hearts is the first step. Hope is an illusion. It is the downfall of many civilizations. We have rigorously researched hope, and we have recently learned how to measure it. Our goal is to get everyone to less than ten percent hope. You will remain in your chair for as long as it takes. You will not be released until your hope is below ten percent. You will receive one slice of bread and one glass of water per day. Nothing more. You will not be permitted to use the restroom. Your chair is your restroom. Feel free to defecate and urinate on yourself and on your chair. We have found that sleep deprivation reduces hope dramatically. As a consequence,

you will not be allowed to sleep. Please take note of the electrical current attached to your chairs. There are infrared cameras and monitors attached to your helmets. Those caught sleeping will receive automatic electric shock. We have a zero tolerance policy for sleeping. If you are caught sleeping more than three times, you will be electrocuted to death. Lastly, your helmet must remain on at all times. If you remove your helmet, you will be electrocuted to death. No chances. Are there any questions?

Narrator

Shrills fill the air.

Echelon

Okay. Then let us begin. Please take the helmet above your chair, and place it on your head.

Narrator

Before putting their helmets on, Sophina, Scarlett, and Champion search the room for one another. They are unable to see each other because they are in different rows. They each put the helmet on and wait for instructions. The helmet is sound proof. The complete silence enables one to hear the sound of their heartbeat. It is completely dark inside the helmet.

Echelon

You will remain in this position for two days. After two days, we will check your hope readings. People, with satisfactory hope readings, will be treated to a steamer, five course meal, and eight hours of sleep.

Narrator

Within less than ten minutes, a person begins to freak out.

Person

Let me out of here! Let me out!

Narrator

The person attempts to remove the straps but is unsuccessful. The person removes the helmet. The person is immediately electrocuted to death. The smell of burnt human flesh dominates the senses. The helmets have two speakers. Echelon taps into the speakers to give everyone a warning.

Echelon

Let that be a lesson to all of you. We are not the enemy. You are the enemy. You are an enemy to yourselves. We are here to save you from yourselves. The removal of hope is a necessary step in the process.

Narrator

After twenty four hours have passed, Scarlett begins to fall asleep. She is instantly shocked. She lets out a loud scream. Sophina cannot hear her because the helmets are sound proof. After thirty six hours, Sophina begins to fall asleep and is shocked. After forty two hours, both Scarlett and Sophina fall asleep twice more. If they fall asleep again, they will be shocked to death. They each begin singing to keep themselves awake. Champion has trained for this kind of torture and has not fallen asleep at all. He worries about Scarlett and Sophina. His worry is exacerbated by the smell of burnt human flesh. He prays that Scarlett and Sophina are still alive. Echelon taps into the speakers again.

Echelon

Congratulations to all who are still alive. Please be patience. You will all have your hope readings captured by

the end of the day. Enjoy a documentary on human suffering while you wait.

Narrator

A TV screen is engaged inside the helmets. Everyone is now watching a documentary on human suffering. They are forced to watch it. If they close their eyes, they will be shocked. If Sophina or Scarlett close their eyes, they will be killed.

Reader

I will be taking your hope readings. I will be placing the reader on your chest.

Narrator

Reader places a cold metal scanner on Champion's chest. After ten seconds, it beeps.

Reader

Thank you. You are all done.

Narrator

Reader does not reveal the results to him. Reader takes Sophina and Scarlett's readings. Again, Reader does not reveal the results. It takes four hours for everyone to be read.

Echelon

You did even better than the last group. Forty percent have less than ten percent hope. Great job everyone. If you did not receive less than ten percent, do not worry. You will get there in time. Those who passed will now be released.

Narrator

Readers go around the room and unstrap everyone who passed.

Reader

Get in line, and follow the group to the steamers.

Scarlett

Did my mom pass?

Reader

I do not know. If she did, you will see her in the steamers.

Narrator

Scarlett follows the line of people to the steamers. She looks for her mom but does not find her. Scarlett is only ten years old. She is practically the only child who passed. The other children were not so fortunate. A kid her age approaches her.

Kid

I thought I was the only kid who passed.

Scarlett

Me too.

Kid

My name is April.

Scarlett

Nice to meet you April. My name is Scarlett.

April

It is a pleasure to meet you Scarlett. Let us quickly take a steamer. After we clean up and get something to eat, we can plan our escape.

Narrator

Scarlett is surprised by April. April is very well spoken and mature for her age. They get cleaned up and meet each other in the cafeteria.

April

We cannot trust anyone. We have to stick together.

Scarlett

How do I know that I can trust you?

April

That is a good point.

Narrator

April thinks for a moment.

April

You can ask me anything you want.

Scarlett

How old are you?

April

I am eleven years old.

Scarlett

You look eleven years old, but you seem older.

April

That is because I have been alive longer than eleven years.

Scarlett

You lost me.

April

Have you ever heard of Omega?

Scarlett

Yes. I have family there.

April

Then you know the atmosphere prevents aging.

Scarlett

Yeah.

April

When I was eleven, my family and I moved to Omega 4 and opened a gold farm. We lived there several years. We recently moved back to the Planet Nectar. Nectar is where I was born.

Scarlett

How did you get here?

April

One week after we moved back to Nectar, my class hawk got abducted. Next thing I know, I am thrown into a dark prison cell and locked in.

Scarlett

What about your parents?

April

They are still on Nectar.

Narrator

Scarlett looks troubled.

April

What is wrong?

Scarlett

My mom and friend did not pass.

Narrator

April tries to comfort her.

April

I am sure they will pass the next round.

Scarlett

I hope so.

April

If you do not mind me asking, how did you get here?

Scarlett

We live on Lotus. Lotus was invaded by aliens. I am not sure what race. We escaped by hijacking one of their space cycles. We came to Stanton Island to seek refuge. We had no idea that Saxons had conquered it.

April

Lotus is in Julius Galaxy. Why do you live in Julius Galaxy when you have family in Omega?

Scarlett

We moved to Julius Galaxy for my mother's job. We really like it. I do not know if Lotus will be the same after the invasion. I wish there was something I could do. I wish I could help.

April

We have to help ourselves first. We have to escape this prison.

Scarlett

You are right.

April

We will wait for your mom and friend to pass the next round. Then, we will plan our escape.

II. Odd Number

Echelon

It is now time for the second round. You will begin by following the verbal prompts. The verbal prompts will run for twelve hours. Failure to respond to a verbal prompt will result in a shock. Failure to respond to more than three verbal prompts will result in death. Let us begin.

Prompt

What is your name?

Sophina

My name is Sophina.

Prompt

Sophina is a nice name.

Narrator

Sophina thinks, “Why is this prompt complementing me? I do not buy it.” Sophina plays along.

Sophina

Thank you.

Prompt

I expect to get your hope below ten percent by the end of this round. I know exactly what you are feeling.

Sophina

What do you mean?

Prompt

I did not pass the first round either.

Sophina

You are an actual person? I thought you were a program.

Prompt

I am a person just like you. I passed the second round and will help you do the same.

Narrator

“What kind of twisted place is this?” Sophina thinks.

Sophina

What is your name?

Prompt

For security reasons, we are not allowed to reveal our names. Do not worry. You are in good hands. Remember not to sleep. If you sleep, I will be forced to shock you. If you fail to respond to a prompt, I will be forced to shock you. If you fail to respond to a prompt over three times, I will be forced to kill you. Try to relax. I have a feeling you will pass with flying colors. We will begin when the light turns green.

Narrator

Before Sophina’s light turns green, she can already smell burnt flesh. Dozens of people are electrocuted to death within the first minute. Sophina cannot keep her mind off Scarlett.

Sophina

I hope Scarlett is okay.

Prompt

Who is Scarlett?

Sophina

Scarlett is my daughter. She is here with me.

Narrator

Prompt finds Scarlett's name on the pass list. Prompt knows that she is alive.

Prompt

I am sorry to inform you that your daughter is dead. She was electrocuted to death in the first round.

Narrator

Sophina becomes hysterical. She breaks down and starts to cry. The green light comes on.

Prompt

Repeat after me. My name is Sophina, and I have no hope.

Narrator

Sophina is crying so hard that she fails to respond. She receives a sharp jolt of electricity.

Prompt

I will kill you if I have to. Repeat after me. My name is Sophina, and I have no hope.

Narrator

Again, Sophina fails to respond. Prompt delivers another jolt of electricity through Sophina's body. It is twice as strong as the last. Sophina spasms as she is electrocuted.

Prompt

If you want to die, that is fine by me. Repeat after me. My name is Sophina, and I have no hope.

Narrator

Sophina does not respond. She continues weeping. As she weeps, she screams. She receives an even stronger jolt of electricity. She continues to cry while being electrocuted.

Sophina
Scarlett!

Narrator
She cries out.

Sophina
Scarlett!

Narrator
Echelon gets on her speakers.

Echelon
You have failed to respond to three prompts in a row. If you fail another, you will be killed.

Prompt
Repeat after me. My name is Sophina, and I have no hope.

Sophina
I forgive you.

Narrator
Prompt is supposed to kill Sophina at this point, but, for some reason, she just cannot do it. She calls for Echelon.

Echelon
What is the hold up? You know the rules. If she does not respond, she dies.

Prompt
Take her hope reading.

Echelon
What?

Prompt
You want them to get below ten percent hope, right?

Echelon
Of course.

Prompt
Then start taking their hope reading before the final electrocution. Take it just before you kill them. If it is under ten percent, release them. If it is not, fry them. It is a much more efficient use of your time and resources. It also better reflects upon the integrity and intellect of an Echelon.

Narrator
Echelon contemplates Prompt's comments.

Echelon
Very well. I will have her read at once.

Narrator
A hope reader is dispatched. The reader arrives at Sophina's chair.

Sophina
Have you come to kill me in person?

Narrator
The hope reader takes her reading and calls for Echelon.

Echelon
Are you sure this is correct?

Reader
Yes.

Echelon
Take it again.

Narrator
The reader takes Sophina's hope reading once more.

Reader
Look for yourself.

Echelon
That is impossible. Get me another reader.

Reader 2
I get the same thing.

Echelon
Something is not right. Check it again.

Narrator
Echelon has ten other readers check Sophina, and they all get the same number.

Prompt
What do you want me to do?

Narrator
Echelon is not sure how to respond. This is extremely rare for an Echelon.

Prompt
What do you want me to do?

Echelon

Give me a second. I am trying to think.

Reader

The strange thing is that two hundred percent is not even a real number.

Echelon

I am aware of that! Release her and bring her to my office. I want everyone to cease the prompt exercise until further notice.

Narrator

The readers take Sophina to Echelon's office. Echelon is perplexed by Sophina. He attempts to befriend her by providing her with a full course meal.

Echelon

Sit. Eat.

Narrator

Sophina is starving. All she has eaten, in the last three days, is three slices of bread. She knows what Echelon is trying to do. She refuses the food and refuses to talk to him.

Echelon

You have a marvelous future ahead of you. I can give you everything that you desire. Whatever you want is yours. In return, you will tell me how you did your trick.

Sophina

I will tell you everything you want to know.

Narrator

Echelon is jubilant.

Echelon
So, what is your secret?

Sophina
Come closer. I do not want anyone to hear.

Narrator
Echelon leans closer.

Sophina
Suckers say what.

Narrator
She says softly.

Echelon
What?

Sophina
I said suckers say what.

Narrator
She says loader.

Echelon
What?

Sophina
I said suckers say what.

Narrator
She shouts.

Echelon
What?

Sophina
You are a sucker.

Echelon
Are you mocking me?

Narrator
Sophina laughs.

Sophina
You are so smart that you are stupid. I am not telling you a thing. I am inferior, remember? You figure it out.

Echelon
I am beginning to lose my patience with...

Sophina
Shut up. Kill me or release me but do not talk to me. I cannot stand to hear another word come out of your ignorant mouth.

Narrator
Echelon is speechless. He has never had a human speak to him this way before.

Echelon
Have it your way. Guards!

Narrator
The guards come in.

Echelon
Lock her away until I decide what I want to do with her.

Narrator

The guards throw her into a dark prison cell. She lies there weeping over the loss of her daughter. She is surprised when no one comes to check on her. Two hours have gone by, and no one has checked on her. “Did they forget about me?” She thinks. The prison cell is cold. There are no windows. The floor and the walls are concrete. There is no bed. There is no running water. There is a toilet, but it is disgusting. It is covered in feces. Sophina lies in the middle of the floor. As she mourns the loss of her daughter, she eventually falls asleep. She sleeps for ten hours straight. Her back is sore from sleeping on the concrete floor. When she opens her eyes, Echelon is sitting on a small chair right outside her cell. Echelon is asleep. She notices his keys on his belt. She quietly crawls to the front of the cell and reaches for the keys. She stretches her arm as far as she can, but Echelon is sitting too far away. She decides to wake him up.

Sophina
Suckers say what!

Echelon
What? What is it?

Narrator
Sophina jokes.

Echelon
I see that you are awake. How was your sleep?

Narrator
Sophina says nothing.

Echelon
There is something that I want to show you.

Narrator

Echelon instructs the guards to open the cell. He brings her to a strange looking room. It looks like a collaborative mural. It is neither appealing nor repulsive. The right wall is completely covered in drawings. People are drawing on the left wall.

Echelon

This is where we crush dreams. We tell them what they can and cannot do. We tell them what they can realistically accomplish with their skills and ability. They will remain in this room until their drawings begin to reflect what we tell them. Once their dreams are crushed, we release them to perform menial work tasks.

Sophina

Why are you showing me this?

Echelon

I want to know if you think these people have hope.

Sophina

You are asking me what other people think. That is ridiculous. If you want to know if they have hope, ask them not me.

Narrator

Echelon is astonished at Sophina's response. Echelons are arrogant. It shocks them when people, outside of their species, can engage them intellectually.

Echelon

I like you Sophina. I really do. I would hate to see you locked in prison forever. Saxons have a process. That process requires that you remove the hope from your heart and mind. Until you do that, you will remain a prisoner.

Sophina

Wrong again Echelon. You can imprison a person's body, but you cannot imprison their mind. As long as I have hope, my mind is free. I would rather be in prison with hope than out of prison without hope. To me, living without hope is the worst kind of prison.

Narrator

Echelon escorts Sophina back to her prison cell and locks her inside.

Echelon

You are an impressive specimen. Nonetheless, you will likely die in this prison unless you remove the hope from your heart and mind. Tomorrow, you will continue your programming. I will not save you again. Answer the prompts or be electrocuted to death. It is your choice.

III. Lord's Prayer

Guard

Do not tell anyone, but I gave you one extra slice of bread.

Narrator

Sophina examines her meal. She finds two loaves of bread and a large cup of water.

Sophina

Thank you.

Guard

This place makes me sick. The way they treat people is not right. I cannot wait to get out of here.

Sophina

You want to break?

Guard

I do not understand what you mean by break.

Sophina

I apologize. Break means leave where my family comes from.

Guard

In that case, I most certainly want to break this place.

Sophina

But you are a Saxon.

Guard

I am a Strata Saxon, but I am ashamed of my own people. They bring destruction wherever they go. Where Saxons are present, there is no peace.

Narrator

Sophina has not touched her food. The conversation has distracted her from eating.

Guard

Please eat. You are probably starving after only eating one slice of bread a day.

Narrator

Sophina sighs as she looks at her two slices of bread.

Sophina

I must be grateful for what I have. There are places in the universe where people receive less than this. Every bite of bread I take, I do so with thanksgiving.

Guard

Your species does not deserve to be in prison. It is us who should be in prison. It is us who should be slaves.

Narrator

Sophina consumes her two slices of bread and large cup of water. Her hunger pains have become worse since consuming the food. She holds her stomach and groans softly. Her body is malnourished and weak.

Guard

This is not right. I will be right back.

Narrator

The guard returns with a large bag.

Guard

I will keep watch while you eat.

Narrator

Guard opens Sophina's cell and hands her a bag full of water, bread, and fruit.

Sophina

Thank you.

Narrator

Sophina eats a grapefruit within seconds. She rests briefly.

Sophina

This is a lot of food. Is there anyone else in this section of the prison?

Guard

There are three others.

Narrator

Sophina reaches into the bag. She takes out one slice of bread.

Sophina

Please give the three others the rest of the food. Make sure they each get an equal portion.

Narrator

Sophina hands Guard the bag of food. Guard nods his head and takes the bag. He then distributes the food to the three prisoners. When he comes back, he sees Sophina kneeling on the ground with her head bowed. Guard stares at her but does not interrupt her.

Sophina

How long have you been there?

Guard

I am sorry. I did not want to interrupt you. What were you doing exactly?

Sophina
I was praying.

Guard
What is praying?

Sophina
Praying is the way we communicate with God.

Guard
Who is God?

Sophina
God is our creator. He gives us strength when we are weak. He gives us direction and guidance. He heals us when we are sick. He protects us from our enemies. It is in God that we have hope of a better life to come.

Guard
You are able to communicate with him by praying?

Sophina
That is what we believe.

Guard
If I pray, will God listen to me too?

Sophina
Sure. Just pray from your heart, and God will hear you.

Guard
Can you pray with me?

Sophina
I would love to.

Narrator
Guard opens Sophina's cell and goes in with her.

Sophina
I want you to close your eyes and place your hands together like this.

Narrator
Guard does as instructed.

Sophina
Clear all the thoughts in your mind. Focus your heart and mind on God, and then repeat after me.

Narrator
Sophina and Guard recite the Lord's Prayer. When they are done, Sophina helps Guard to his feet.

Sophina
When you pray from your heart, God hears you and will answer your prayers.

Guard
Thank you Sophina.

Narrator
Guard exits and locks Sophina's cell.

Guard
I will pray that God rescues you from this prison.

Narrator
Guard then becomes worried and saddened.

Sophina
What is wrong?

Guard
I forgot to tell God my name. How will he know it is me?

Sophina
God already knows your name.

Guard
Really?

Sophina
Yes.

Guard
I am going to tell him my name just to be on the safe side.

Narrator
Sophina laughs.

Guard
Would you like to know my name?

Sophina
Certainly.

Guard
My name is Strata 666.

Sophina
Is that the name your mother gave you?

Strata 666
I do not have a mother.

Sophina

Then how were you born?

Strata 666

In Arcadia, my father creates life. I was not born. I was created by my father's hands.

Sophina

How did you get the name Strata 666?

Strata 666

Strata 666 is the name that man gave me.

Sophina

If you do not mind, I would like to call you by a different name.

Strata 666

What is wrong with Strata 666?

Sophina

It has no personality to it. What does the 666 stand for?

Strata 666

I have no idea.

Sophina

Were you the 666'th child?

Strata 666

I do not think so.

Sophina

Is 666 your favorite number?

Strata 666

I do not have a favorite number.

Sophina

You should drop the 666 from your name. Plus, Strata refers to your species not you specifically.

Strata 666

You are right.

Sophina

Pick a nickname for yourself. I will call you by your nickname.

Narrator

Strata 666 thinks for a moment.

Strata 666

You can call me C flat.

Sophina

I like the name C flat. What does it mean?

Strata 666

It is a musical key.

Sophina

You like music?

Strata 666

I love music. Music has the power to bring people together. Music has the power to spread joy and happiness. Music can make the impossible possible.

Sophina

C flat is a perfect name for you. From now on, I will call you C flat.

C flat
Okay.

Narrator
The two seem very pleased with the new name.

C flat
Can I ask you a question?

Sophina
Of course.

C flat
Is it true you received a hope reading of two hundred percent?

Sophina
Yes.

C flat
Two hundred percent is not a real number. How did you receive such a score?

Sophina
Can I trust you?

C flat
You certainly can.

Sophina
Come closer, so no one else hears.

Narrator

C flat comes closer to Sophina.

Sophina
My secret is...

Guard 2
Hey! What is going on in here?

C flat
Nothing is going on. I was just telling Sophina that she better cooperate with our processing procedures.

Guard 2
Good. She will be killed tomorrow if she does not cooperate.

C flat
That is what I told her.

Guard 2
Echelon needs your assistance at once.

C flat
Okay. I am on my way.

Narrator
C flat leans closer to Sophina.

C flat
We will talk later, okay?

Narrator
He whispers.

Sophina
Okay.

Narrator
Sophina whispers back.

IV. Strange Visitor

April
Scarlett, wake up?

Scarlett
I am tired.

Narrator
Scarlett moans.

April
I know. I am tired to, but we have to plan our escape.

Scarlett
Can we plan it tomorrow? I have not slept in three days.

April
I do not know if we will have a chance. Who knows what the next test will be.

Scarlett
You are right.

Narrator
Since Scarlett and April passed the first round of processing, they are given comfortable bunk beds for the night. They share a cell with two other prisoners. The cell has a small window with bars. The cell has one small toilet and a small water fountain. The cell is ten feet by ten feet. The walls are covered in writing and poems from previous prisoners. Scarlett sleeps on the top bunk. April sleeps on the bottom. Scarlett climbs down and sits on April's bunk.

Scarlett
What is the plan?

April

We need to steal a key. That would be a good start.

Scarlett

How are we supposed to do that?

April

I could fake a heart attack to cause a distraction, and...

Scarlett

Quiet down. One of them is waking up.

Narrator

Their fellow cellmate is beginning to wake up. April and Scarlett remain silent for a minute or so.

Scarlett

We have to keep our voices down.

Narrator

Scarlett whispers.

Cellmate

Are you not tired?

Scarlett

We were just about to go to sleep.

Cellmate

Well, keep it down. I am trying to get some rest.

April

Sorry. It will not happen again.

Narrator

The cellmate falls asleep after a few minutes. Scarlett and April begin planning again.

Scarlett
Where were we?

April
The keys. We need to steal some keys.

Scarlett
That is right. You are going to fake a heart attack. What should I do?

Narrator
April seems distracted.

Scarlett
April.

April
Yes.

Scarlett
I asked you a question.

April
I am sorry. I was trying to read this poem on the wall.

Narrator
They gaze at the poem.

April
“In the day, they sleep. In the evening, they eat. In the night, they creep.”

Scarlett

“Be wise. Do not be hypnotized. Do not stay. Flee and run away.”

April

It looks like it was written by a previous inmate.

Scarlett

I wonder what it means.

April

There is more.

Narrator

She says as she looks closer.

April

“As high as the sky, they jump but do not fly.”

Scarlett

“Like acrobats, they flip. In the forest, they rip.”

Narrator

The two stare at the poem and try to decipher its meaning.

Scarlett

What is the poet trying to say?

April

I have no clue. I wish Luke was here.

Scarlett

Who is Luke?

April

Luke is my neighbor back home on Nectar. He is great at solving puzzles. He would figure this poem out in a jiffy.

Scarlett

It sounds like the poet is trying to warn us about something.

April

What could it be warning us about?

Narrator

They glare at the poem a moment longer.

Scarlett

We really need to figure a way out of here.

April

We could probably fit through that window if the bars were not there.

Narrator

Scarlett walks to the window and pulls on the bars.

Scarlett

These bars are solid. There is no way we are getting through this window.

Narrator

Scarlett walks back to April's bunk and sits down. Scarlett begins to pray.

April

What are you doing?

Scarlett

I am praying.

April

Why?

Scarlett

Have you never seen a person pray before?

April

I have, but I do not believe in prayer.

Scarlett

Well, I do. Let me pray in peace.

Narrator

While Scarlett is praying, April falls asleep. Soon, Scarlett also falls asleep. She dreams that she is lying on the top bunk. As she is lying there, something bright and shiny flies through the window. It looks like a fire fly. It stops in the center of the prison cell. Scarlett looks in amazement. It begins to grow and become brighter. No one else can see it. Guards walk by the cell as if nothing is happening. Her cellmates remain asleep. The shiny object grows by the second.

Object

Hello Scarlett.

Scarlett

How do you know my name?

Object

There is no time. You and April must escape.

Scarlett

Are you an angel?

Narrator

The shiny object begins to dim. When it has dimmed completely, a flawless woman remains. The woman has

dark brown skin. Her hair is braided and contains a blue and white flower. She has four small wings. She is wearing a strapless silk dress. The dress is white. She is wearing high heels made of glass. A gold bracelet occupies her right arm. She is carrying a small blue wand. Her voice is soft and inviting.

Object

I am a dream fairy.

Scarlett

A dream fairy?

Fairy

You and your friend must escape tonight.

Scarlett

Why?

Fairy

There is no time to explain. The guards will be coming any minute.

Scarlett

How are we supposed to escape? We are too big to fit through the window.

Fairy

You will not be going through the window. Look under your bed. You will find two magic rings. The rings are all you need to escape. Guard the rings with your life.

Narrator

The dream fairy begins to fly away.

Scarlett

Dream fairy, wait!

Fairy

The rings are all you need.

Narrator

She says as she exits the window. Scarlett wakes up immediately.

Scarlett

April, wake up.

April

What is it?

Scarlett

I had a pluto dream.

Narrator

Scarlett tells April her dream.

April

That is one weird dream.

Scarlett

It felt so real.

April

You have not slept in three days, remember?

Scarlett

Yeah.

April

That is probably why you had such an unusual dream.

Scarlett

You are probably right. We should get some rest.

Narrator

Scarlett gazes at the window and thinks about her dream. As she is looking, she sees a tiny object. Out of curiosity, she quietly climbs down to see what it is. To her surprise, it is a blue and white flower.

Scarlett

April.

Narrator

She shouts out of excitement.

April

Keep it down. What is it?

Narrator

Scarlett goes to April's bunk.

Scarlett

It is a blue and white flower.

April

Where did you get it?

Scarlett

It was by the window.

April

That is strange.

Scarlett

That is not the strangest part. This is the exact same flower the dream fairy wore in my dream.

April
Are you sure?

Scarlett
I am positive.

April
Do you think it is a coincidence?

Scarlett
I do not believe in coincidences.

April
What do you want to do?

Scarlett
I think we should check underneath the bed.

Narrator
The two crawl underneath the bed and search for the rings.

April
I do not see anything. Do you?

Scarlett
Not yet. Wait. I think I found something.

Narrator
Scarlett grasps the objects and crawls from under the bed.
April and Scarlett sit on April's bunk. The objects are
covered in dust. Scarlett dusts them off with her shirt.

Scarlett
The fairy was right. How can this be? I was asleep.

April

What did the fairy say to do with them?

Scarlett

She did not say. She just said they were magical and could help us escape.

April

We should try them on.

Narrator

They each put a ring on. They walk to the window to get a better look at the rings. Moonlight shines through the window.

April

It fits me perfectly.

Scarlett

Mine too.

April

We will try to figure out what to do with them tomorrow.

Scarlett

Okay. We should keep wearing them so we do not lose them.

April

Good idea.

V. Dirty Escape

Cellmate

How did you subdue a Strata? They are half Titan. You are just a human.

Champion

I am not a human.

Cellmate

If you are not a human, that means I am not a human. And I am a human, so that means you are a human too.

Cellmate 2

If you are not a human, then what are you?

Champion

I am an Omegan.

Narrator

The cellmates are unsure.

Cellmate

Is Omegan a synonym for human on steroids?

Narrator

The cellmates joke.

Cellmate 2

I saw your steroid pack. There is one steroid per pack.

Cellmate

Just admit you are taking steroids. There is no other explanation for your muscle tone.

Champion

Look at my eyes.

Cellmate 2

Why? Do you want to kiss me?

Cellmate

How romantic.

Narrator

The cellmates tease.

Champion

Are you finished joking?

Cellmate

I have one more.

Champion

Fine.

Cellmate

Knock. Knock.

Champion

Who is there?

Cellmate

Human.

Champion

Human who?

Cellmate

Human on steroids who says he is an Omegan when he is really not an Omegan, but he is a human taking steroids

through his abdominals so that his abdominals look like a plate of armor.

Narrator

The two cellmates laugh.

Cellmate 2

Your eyes do look different. Cellmate, look at his eyes.

Narrator

Cellmate moves closer to Champion.

Cellmate

Your eyes are brown and blue.

Narrator

Cellmate says surprisingly.

Champion

All Omegans have two eye colors.

Cellmate

Well, we stand corrected. You really are an Omegan.

Cellmate 2

Where do your people live?

Champion

My people live in a beautiful galaxy called Omega.

Cellmate

Can you describe Omega to us?

Champion

Okay.

Narrator

Champion describes Omega to the cellmates.

Cellmate 2

Wow. I would like to visit Omega someday, assuming we make it out alive.

Champion

We will make it out if we play along.

Cellmate

I am tired of the mind games they play in this place. I do not know how much more I can take.

Champion

I think I found a way out. It is messy, but I think it will work.

Cellmate 2

What is your plan?

Champion

How do I know I can trust you? You might be a spy.

Cellmate 2

I am not a spy.

Champion

That is exactly what a spy would say.

Cellmate 2

Then I am a spy.

Champion

That is also exactly what a spy would say.

Cellmate 2

Well, what do you want me to say?

Narrator

Champion suspiciously glares at Cellmate 2.

Cellmate 2

Cellmate, would you tell...

Narrator

Cellmate 2 realizes that he does not know Champion's name.

Cellmate 2

I am sorry. I did not get your name.

Champion

That is because I did not give it to you.

Cellmate 2

Cellmate, would you tell Mr. I did not give it to you that I am not a spy?

Cellmate

He is not a spy.

Cellmate 2

I told you.

Cellmate

He is a super spy.

Cellmate 2

Man, shut up. He is not going to tell us the plan if you keep joking.

Cellmate
Okay.

Champion
Is Cellmate 2 a spy Cellmate?

Narrator
Cellmate 2 gives Cellmate a warning look.

Cellmate
He is not a spy or a super spy.

Cellmate 2
Are you satisfied?

Cellmate
He is a mega super spy.

Narrator
Cellmate 2 tackles Cellmate and puts him in a head lock.

Cellmate 2
You joke too much! You never know when to quit. We are going to die in this prison. Do you think dying is funny? Laugh while I choke you to death.

Narrator
Champion watches as the two cellmates fight each other. Cellmate is losing consciousness.

Champion
I believe you. You are not a spy.

Narrator
Cellmate 2 lets Cellmate go. Cellmate is coughing and trying to catch his breath.

Cellmate

You almost killed me you son of a bitch.

Cellmate 2

You asked for it.

Cellmate

I did not ask for shit. You better sleep with your eyes open tonight.

Champion

Are you ready to hear the plan?

C/C 2

Yes.

Champion

We can escape through the toilet.

Cellmate 2

That is your plan? That is a stupid plan. We cannot fit in the toilet.

Champion

Not this one.

Cellmate 2

What do you mean?

Champion

Have you seen a Titan toilet?

Cellmate

Hell no. I am not going through a toilet where the doodoo is bigger than me.

Champion

It is either swim with Titan doodoo or die in prison. Which do you prefer?

Cellmate

I prefer to die in prison.

Cellmate 2

You do not mean that. After we escape, you can always take a long steamer to clean up.

Champion

I told you my plan was messy.

Cellmate

When were you planning to execute this plan of yours?

Champion

I first need to find my friends. Once I find them, we are out of here. You are welcome to come with us.

Cellmate

If it is the only way, I guess we will come with you.

Champion

Good. In the meantime, practice holding your breath. I have been studying their sewage and disposal system. If my calculations are correct, there will be no Oxygen for about four minutes.

Cellmate

I do not think I can hold my breath for four minutes. Two minutes is the longest I have ever held my breath.

Cellmate 2

Four minutes is dangerously long for a human.

Champion

There may be brief opportunities for Oxygen, but you should plan for the worst. Practice holding your breath just in case.

Cellmate

We will try.

Champion

Tomorrow, we will play the Saxon's little mind game. We will pass and meet back here. Tell anyone about my plan, and I will kill you. Do you understand?

Cellmate

My mouth is shut.

Cellmate 2

I will not tell a soul.

VI. Soft Spot

Narrator

Sophina is worried about tomorrow. “What if I do not pass?” She thinks. As she is sitting in her cell, she hears one of the prisoners.

Prisoner

Thanks for the food. That was really nice of you.

Sophina

You are welcome. Where are you?

Prisoner

I am four cells down. I am to your right.

Sophina

Where are the other prisoners?

Prisoner

They are in the west wing about forty cells down.

Sophina

How long have you been in here?

Prisoner

I have lost track. It has been years.

Sophina

Why did they put you in here?

Prisoner

I did not draw what they wanted. I kept drawing an astronaut.

Sophina

Why an astronaut?

Prisoner

Since I was a kid, I have wanted to be an astronaut. I love to explore, and I love outer space. Year after year, I kept drawing an astronaut. They got tired of me and threw me in prison.

Sophina

I think you would make a great astronaut.

Prisoner

Thanks.

Sophina

Is there any way out of this place?

Prisoner

There might be.

Sophina

How do we get out?

Prisoner

It is risky.

Sophina

Being in this prison is risky. I will take my chances.

Prisoner

Saxons find humans to be unattractive, so there is no use in flirting with them. Believe me. I tried.

Sophina

You were going to seduce your way out?

Prisoner

I have flirted my way out of dozens of speeding tickets. I figured it was worth a shot. The good news is there have been several recent human promotions. The humans have been promoted to cell cleaners. They scrub and clean the prison cells at night. They have keys just like the guards.

Sophina

That does not seem risky at all. Just try flirting with one of them.

Prisoner

I did.

Sophina

Well, how did it go?

Prisoner

It did not go well. The cleaner tried to rape me. I was lucky enough to get the attention of a Saxon guard. The human was demoted and moved to another location.

Sophina

I wish we could share a cell. One of us could flirt to lure him into the cell. Then we could attack him and steal his keys.

Prisoner

That would be a great idea. We have a few hours to figure it out.

Sophina

What is with all the writings on the walls?

Prisoner

They are from past prisoners.

Narrator
Sophina takes a closer look.

Sophina
“The bars are strong, but the cell is weak. A soft spot is what you seek.”

Prisoner
That is an interesting one.

Narrator
The two contemplate the meaning.

Prisoner
It is like the poet is trying to tell us something.

Narrator
Sophina stands up. She begins inspecting the cell as she thinks aloud.

Sophina
“The bars are strong, but the cell is weak.”

Narrator
She says as she pulls on the cell bars. She stands there holding the bars.

Sophina
How can a cell be weak? It looks like it is made out of solid brick and concrete.

Prisoner
I have stopped trying to figure out the meaning of the poems. I just read them for fun.

Sophina

I really think the poet is trying to say something. “A soft spot is what you seek.”

Prisoner

Do yourself a favor and let it go. Otherwise, you will drive yourself crazy.

Sophina

You are probably right.

Prisoner

I am going to take a nap.

Sophina

A nap sounds like a good idea.

Narrator

They both lay in their separate cells and rest. Sophina is having trouble sleeping. She keeps thinking about the poem.

Sophina

“The bars are strong, but the cell is weak. A soft spot is what you seek.”

Narrator

Sophina stands back up and begins inspecting the cell more closely. She walks around the cell while touching the walls. She presses the concrete bricks. “There is nothing soft about this cell,” she thinks. She begins thinking aloud.

Sophina

A soft spot does not have to literally be soft, does it? It could be metaphor.

Narrator

She continues looking around the cell as she thinks.

Sophina

Maybe the poet means that the soft spot is like a sweet spot. A sweet spot is like a perfect spot. To find a perfect spot, I have to inspect every spot.

Narrator

Sophina begins pressing down on every spot in the cell. Two hours pass, and Sophina is still looking for the perfect spot. She sits back down. “What am I missing,” she thinks. “Is the poet referring to a soft spot, sweet spot, perfect spot, or just a spot?”

Prisoner

Are you awake?

Sophina

Yes.

Prisoner

How was your nap?

Sophina

I did not take one.

Prisoner

Why not?

Sophina

I have been up trying to figure out this poem.

Prisoner

I told you to let it go.

Sophina
I think I am close to decoding it.

Prisoner
What does it mean?

Sophina
I have to look for the perfect spot in the cell.

Prisoner
There is no perfect spot in this disgusting cell. The poet was crazy.

Sophina
I do not think the poet was crazy. I think the poet may have been a genius.

Prisoner
Let me know when you have given up. I am going back to sleep.

Narrator
Sophina stands in the center of her cell and closes her eyes. "Is this the perfect spot," she wonders. Then it hits her.

Sophina
Wake up. The poet was a genius. The answer was staring me right in the face.

Prisoner
How so?

Sophina
I was seeking a soft spot, remember?

Prisoner

I thought you were seeking a perfect spot.

Sophina

That is true, but I was initially seeking a soft spot. The poem said to seek a soft spot.

Prisoner

Yeah.

Sophina

Well, I found a soft spot.

Prisoner

Where?

Sophina

I found it in the poem itself.

Prisoner

How did you find a soft spot in a poem?

Sophina

The words soft spot, in the poem, is the soft spot that I seek.

Narrator

Sophina walks to the wall where she read the poem. She pushes down on the words “soft spot.” The brick is hard, but it is not as hard as the others. She begins scratching the surface with her nails. As she scratches the surface, she notices there is more writing underneath the paint.

Prisoner

What is it?

Sophina

It is another message.

Narrator

She keeps scratching. Finally, the message is completely revealed.

Prisoner

What does it say?

Sophina

It says “Believe, hope, and push.”

Prisoner

That does not make any sense. I am going back to sleep. You should do the same.

Narrator

Sophina closes her eyes, believes, hopes, and pushes the brick. The brick becomes like liquid, and her hand goes through the wall. She reaches around and grips a small item. The brick turns solid the moment she dislodges her arm. She opens her hand and finds a gold pen. “How am I supposed to escape by using a pen?” She decides to write with it. She writes a poem and titles it “Awake.”

Awake

Hope, awake from your slumber. There are only a few left.
Awake from your slumber before we are all put to death.
Hope, awake from your slumber. You are greatly needed.
Awake from your slumber before we are all defeated.
Hope, awake from your slumber. Do so before this night is over.
Awake from your slumber before we become a past tense number.
Hope, awake from your slumber. Put this nightmare to an end.
Awake from your slumber if you are truly my friend.

Narrator

“Should I sign my name at the end?” She thinks. She does not want the guards to know she has been writing on the wall. They will want to know where she got a pen that writes in glowing gold ink. “I will use an alias.” She takes her gold pen and signs “S Nice” to the end of the poem.

Prisoner

You have to see this. It is amazing.

Sophina

What is it?

Prisoner

It is a poem. It is written in gold ink. The ink sparkles and glows.

Sophina

Does it say who wrote it?

Prisoner

It was written by S Nice.

Narrator

Sophina looks at her pen.

Sophina

What kind of pen is this?

Narrator

She says under her breath.

Prisoner

The poem is about hope.

Sophina

It is on my wall too.

Prisoner

It is? Why did you not say something?

Sophina

It did not cross my mind.

Prisoner

I do not remember seeing it here before. It is like is just appeared out of nowhere.

Narrator

Sophina decides to keep the pen a secret. She acts like everything is normal.

Prisoner

Where did S Nice get this ink? It is like the ink is alive.

Sophina

I have no clue.

Narrator

The sound of keys can be heard in the distance.

Prisoner

That must be the cleaner. What should we do?

Sophina

It depends on how strong the cleaner looks. If he is my size or smaller, I will try the plan.

Prisoner

Be careful.

VII. Stubborn Solid

Narrator

The cleaner begins cleaning the cells.

Cleaner

What is this?

Narrator

He says as he opens the cell. He walks in and reads S Nice's poem. He absconds and comes back with several other cleaners.

Cleaner 2

This is remarkable.

Cleaner

I told you.

Cleaner 3

Who do you think wrote it?

Cleaner 4

It says it was written by S Nice.

Cleaner

Who is S Nice?

Cleaner 2

Whoever she is, she better keep her thoughts to herself. If the Saxons find her, they will kill her.

Cleaner

I am going to remove it.

Narrator

Cleaner begins scrubbing the poem. It glows brighter as a result.

Cleaner
Are you guys seeing this?

Cleaner 3
We see it.

Cleaner
I am going to leave it alone.

Cleaner 2
That is a good idea.

Cleaner 4
You are afraid of ink? I will remove it myself.

Narrator
Cleaner 4 takes the soap and scrubbing brush from Cleaner.
He begins vigorously scrubbing. The ink glows brighter.

Cleaner
I think you should stop.

Narrator
Cleaner 4 ignores him. He continues scrubbing. The ink
glows even brighter. The ground begins to quake.

Cleaner 2
Stop! Leave it alone. There is something seriously wrong
here.

Narrator
Cleaner 4 persists.

Cleaner 4

I am going to remove this voodoo ink.

Cleaner 3

If you know what is good for you, you will leave it alone.

Cleaner

Look at your arm.

Cleaner 4

What is wrong with...

Narrator

Cleaner 4 stands to his feet. He begins slowly walking toward the other cleaners.

Cleaner 4

Help me. Please.

Cleaner

Do not touch us.

Cleaner 2

Stay back!

Cleaner 4

Help me.

Narrator

It is spreading to his legs. The other cleaners watch in torment.

Cleaner

We will go get help.

Narrator

Within a minute, they come back with Echelon.
Regrettably, they are too late.

Echelon

You called me down here to see a statue?

Cleaner

It is not a statue. It is our coworker.

Echelon

I am not amused. Get back to work before I demote all of
you.

Narrator

Echelon walks out.

Cleaner 2

Where should we put him?

Cleaner

Let us put him in the cell.

Narrator

They put him in the cell and lock him in.

Cleaner

That should keep him safe until we discover how to change
him back.

Cleaner 3

Take a look at this. The poem is on every wall in every
cell.

Cleaner 2

That is not possible.

Cleaner 3
Look for yourself.

Cleaner
We need to clean the cells or we will get demoted. Just leave the poem alone, and clean around it.

Narrator
After two hours, they finish cleaning each cell.

Cleaner 3
Since we helped you with your section, you better help us with our section.

Cleaner
I guess that is fair.

Narrator
Cleaner helps Cleaner 2 and Cleaner 3 with their sections. After they are finished, Cleaner goes back to his section to check on Cleaner 4.

Cleaner
We told you to leave the poem alone. Why do you have to be so stubborn? We will try to change you back. Just hang on for a few days. You will be safe in here.

Narrator
Cleaner 4 can hear everything Cleaner is saying, but he cannot speak or move. Cleaner 4 remains a motionless gold statue.

Cleaner
I blame myself. I should have helped you sooner. I will make it up to you. I promise.

VIII. Mind Game

Guard

Rise and shine maggots. Happy time is over. You will begin round two of processing in ten minutes.

Scarlett

April, wake up. We begin processing in ten minutes.

April

That means I have ten more minutes to sleep.

Narrator

She says as she performs a long stretch.

Scarlett

I think we should continue planning our escape.

April

We have to focus on the next round. If we do not pass, there will be no escape.

Scarlett

What do you think the next round will be?

April

Whatever it is, I hope it does not involve electricity.

Scarlett

Why do the Saxons hate us so much? What did we ever do to them?

April

We did not do anything to them. Do not worry. They will get what is coming to them. I do not believe in prayer, but I do believe in karma.

Scarlett

What is karma?

Narrator

Scarlett climbs down to April's bunk.

April

Karma is when the universe repays you for your deeds. If you perform good deeds, karma will repay you with good deeds. If you perform evil deeds, karma will repay you with evil deeds.

Scarlett

That makes sense. Karma is kind of like God.

April

I do not believe in God.

Scarlett

I do not believe in karma, but I listened to your explanation.

April

You asked what karma was. I am not asking you what or who God is. I do not care.

Narrator

There is an awkward silence.

April

Fine. How is karma like God?

Scarlett

God repays people for their deeds on Judgment Day. Evil people will be punished. Good people will be rewarded.

April
They are kind of similar.

Scarlett
I told you. I think most people believe roughly the same thing. We just call it by different names.

April
Maybe.

Narrator
Two guards approach and open the cell.

Guard
It is time for processing.

Guard 2
I thought there were four girls in this cell.

Narrator
Guard checks his chart.

Guard
You are right. My chart indicates that this cell should have four girls. Where are the other two girls?

Narrator
Guard 2 walks closer to the girls and grasps their arms.

Guard 2
Where are the other two girls?

Cellmate
We do not know.

Narrator

Guard 2 slaps Cellmate in the face.

Guard 2

Where are they?

Cellmate 2

They were here last night. We do not know where they went. When we woke up, they were gone.

Narrator

Guard 2 summons Echelon.

Echelon

What is the problem?

Guard

I think two girls escaped.

Echelon

That is impossible. There is no way out of this cell. Are you sure there were four girls in the cell?

Guard

That is what my chart indicates.

Echelon

It is probably a mistake. Stop wasting my time.

Narrator

Echelon starts walking away but stops.

Echelon

Who keeps writing on these walls! The prisoners are not permitted to have pens. Yet, a prisoner, by the name of S Nice, has pen with gold ink. I am sick and tired of your

incompetence. Your job, as guards, is to guard goddammit!
I will not hesitate to demote everyone.

Guard

We were not assigned to this wing.

Echelon

Shut up. Just shut up. There are only two logical explanations. Either S Nice is roaming free throughout the prison or every prisoner has a pen with gold ink. Both explanations are unacceptable. Fix the problem, or I will get someone who can.

Narrator

The guards feel like punching Echelon in his pompous face.

Guard

We will get right on it.

Echelon

Get all the prisoners into the dream room at once.

Guard 2

You heard him. Get a move on.

Narrator

He says as he shoves Cellmate and Cellmate 2. The guards close the cell door but keep it unlocked.

Scarlett

Is this another one of their mind games?

April

It must be. We are sitting right here, but they act like they cannot see us. Maybe we should just play along.

Scarlett

Let us see what they do when we break our cell.

Narrator

They slowly emerge from their cell. Guards and prisoners pass in front of them. No one says a word.

Scarlett

Why is everyone ignoring us?

April

I am not falling for it. This is definitely one of their mind games. Let us see if they can ignore this.

Narrator

April walks in front of the guard and screams.

April

I know you can see me.

Narrator

The guards and prisoners walk around her.

April

We are about to escape. You better come and stop us.

Narrator

April shouts.

Scarlett

They are acting like they cannot hear us either? Let me try something.

Narrator

Scarlett starts shoving the guards.

Guard
Stop shoving.

Guard 2
I did not shove you.

Guard
If you did not shove me, who did? You are the only one next to me.

Guard 2
Maybe it was a ghost.

Guard
I do not believe in ghosts. Stop shoving me, or I am going to rearrange your face.

Narrator
April and Scarlett follow the guards and prisoners to the dream room.

Echelon
This is the dream room. We want you to express yourselves. Draw your dreams on the wall. Once you have finished, let us know. We will review your drawing and let you know if you passed. You may begin.

April
What should we draw?

Scarlett
I am going to draw a gymnast. I am in gymnastics back home.

April
You are not scared? What if you fall?

Scarlett

If I fall, I get back up. Practice makes perfect.

Narrator

Scarlett draws a gymnast. April has not drawn anything. She is just staring at the wall.

Scarlett

Why are you not drawing?

April

I do not know what my dream is. I have never thought about it before.

Scarlett

I can help you find it. What do you like doing?

April

I like doing a lot of things.

Scarlett

Like what?

Narrator

April thinks for a moment.

April

I like reading.

Scarlett

That is a good start. What books do you like to read?

April

I like reading romance novels.

Scarlett

Maybe you can dream of becoming an author. You could write your own romance novels.

April

I cannot write well enough to write a novel. Plus, novels are hundreds of pages long. I cannot write hundreds of pages.

Scarlett

You can do anything you set your mind to. Stop saying cannot. Start saying can.

April

How am I supposed to do that?

Scarlett

You can read a novel. You can learn to improve your writing. You can become an author.

April

I can write a romance novel.

Scarlett

You got it.

April

May I borrow your marker?

Narrator

April draws a picture of a romance novel. She puts her name on the front cover. "A novel by April Author."

Scarlett

Nice one.

Narrator

They observe their drawings and imagine what it would be like to live their dream.

Echelon

Who drew these?

Scarlett

We did.

Narrator

Scarlett shouts proudly.

Echelon

I do not have all day people. Who drew a picture of a gymnast and a romance novel?

April

We did.

Narrator

April shouts.

Echelon

Since no one wants to speak up, I will speak to you all as a group.

Narrator

All the prisoners cease drawing and listen to Echelon.

Echelon

Humans cannot be gymnasts or authors. Humans are not strong enough to be gymnasts and not smart enough to be authors.

Narrator

Echelon walks to the drawings and crosses them out.

Scarlett
Hey.

Narrator
Scarlett pleads.

Echelon
I want you to try again. This time, draw something more realistic. You may begin.

April
I have had enough of these mind games. I am getting out of here. Are you coming?

Scarlett
Maybe they really cannot see or hear us.

April
I am not falling for that. That is exactly what they want us to think. They want us to get a false sense of security and then stab us in the back. We will play along with their little game for now. Let us go find your mom.

Narrator
The girls follow three guards into the white chair room. The smell of burnt flesh overwhelms the senses.

Scarlett
I hate this place. Let us be quick.

April
We will split up. I will start from the front and work my way to the back. You start from the back and work your way to the front.

Scarlett

You do not know how they look.

April

Tell me.

Scarlett

My mom stands five feet two inches tall. She weighs one hundred ten pounds. She has dark brown skin. She has long black braids. She has a lovely smile. I look just like my mom. The only difference is that I am a little shorter and have light brown skin. My mom's name is Sophina.

April

What about your friend?

Scarlett

My friend is an Omegan by blood. He stands five feet nine inches tall. He is dressed in a full military uniform. His name is Champion.

April

Okay.

Prompt

Repeat after me. My name is Sophina, and I have no hope.

Sophina

My name is Sophina, and I have hope.

Narrator

Sophina is electrocuted. The electric currents cause her body to tremble.

Prompt

You will die today Sophina. This is your last chance. If you fail to properly respond to my next prompt, I will electrocute you to death.

April
Sophina, is that you?

Narrator
April looks around the chair. She disconnects the chair from the electric current.

Prompt
Repeat after me. My name is Sophina, and I have no hope.

Sophina
I forgive you.

Narrator
Prompt attempts to kill Sophina by pressing the kill switch. Nothing happens. "Am I dead?" Sophina thinks. She can hear Prompt talking to Echelon.

Prompt
It is not working. I pushed the kill switch, but nothing happened.

Echelon
Are you telling me Sophina is still alive?

Prompt
Yes.

Echelon
I am going down there to kill her myself.

Narrator

Echelon hurries down stairs and arrives at Sophina's chair.

Echelon

Where is she?

Prompt 2

Repeat after me. I am a pathetic excuse for a soldier.

Champion

I am a pathetic excuse for a soldier.

Prompt 2

I have no friends. I am not loved.

Champion

I have no friends. I am not loved.

Prompt 2

I will die in prison, and no one will care.

Champion

I will die in prison, and no one will care.

Narrator

Sophina releases Champion from his chair.

Prompt 2

My name is Champion, and I have no hope.

Narrator

No one responds. Prompt flips the electrocution switch.

Prompt 2

This is your last chance Champion. If you fail to properly respond, I will electrocute you to death. Repeat after me. My name is Champion, and I have no hope.

Narration

No one responds. Prompt flips the kill switch. Deadly currents of electricity pulsate through the empty chair. Prompt does not hear screaming and gurgling like she usually does during a kill. She increases the voltage ten times over and sends another current. Smoke begins to fill the air. The chair catches on fire and sets off the fire alarm.

Echelon

What are you doing?

Prompt 2

I am trying to kill Champion.

Narrator

Echelon goes down stairs and checks Champion's chair. He goes back upstairs.

Echelon

His chair is empty.

Prompt

What about Sophina?

Echelon

I cannot find her either. What are you waiting for? Go put out the fire.

Narrator

Echelon yells to the guard. Echelon then gets on the prison intercom.

Echelon

It appears that we have two runaway prisoners. I am uploading their pictures to your computers. You have my permission to kill them. I want them dead yesterday.

Champion

This way. We have to hurry.

Narrator

Champion guides them to a closet.

Champion

Get in before they see us.

Narrator

Just before Champion closes the closet door, a Titan sees the door shut. The Titan runs to the door. The group can hear the Titan's footsteps as he gets closer. They hold each other tight. There is nowhere to hide in the closet. There is nowhere to go. The Titan rips the door off its hinges.

Titan

I got...

Narrator

The Titan calms down when he sees no one in the closet.

Strata

What is it Titan?

Titan

I saw someone run in here.

Strata

Are you sure?

Titan

It looked like someone closed it from the inside.

Narrator

Strata looks inside the closet.

Strata

There is definitely no one in there. You are going to have to explain to Echelon why you broke the door.

Narrator

Strata walks away. Titan stays just a moment longer. Titan looks inside the closet suspiciously.

Titan

I know someone came in here. You cannot fool me. I am a Titan. We are gods of war and deception.

Narrator

Titan picks up the door and lays it over the door opening.

Titan

This is not over.

Narrator

Titan walks away.

Narrator

Scarlett finally realizes that her ring is making her invisible. She removes it.

Sophina

They told me you were dead. I love you so much.

Narrator

She says as she squeezes her daughter.

Scarlett

I love you too mom.

Champion

Am I the only one that saw what just happened?

Narrator

April removes her ring.

April

It must be the dream fairy.

Champion

What dream fairy?

Scarlett

The dream fairy is the one who gave us these rings. She said it was all we needed to escape.

Champion

We were not wearing the rings. How were we invisible?

April

Maybe it makes whoever we touch invisible too.

Champion

That would explain why they did not see us. We need to get to a safe place so we can discuss our next move.

Sophina

I know the perfect place. It is only patrolled once a day.

Champion

That is perfect. We will follow you. You hold Scarlett's hand. I will hold April's hand. This way, we will remain invisible.

Narrator

Sophina takes them to the dark prison.

Sophina

This is my cell. We will be safe in here.

Champion

Numbers are in our favor. The humans outnumber the Saxons three to one, but the Saxons have all the fire power. We need to get our hands on some of their weapons.

Sophina

Even if we get weapons, where will we hide them? Who will fight with them? We cannot fight all the Saxons ourselves.

Champion

We will establish a military base in the forest. We will free as many humans as we can and take them to the forest with us. We will repeat this process until we have enough soldiers and weapons to defeat the Saxons.

April

This prison is enormous. How will we communicate with everyone?

Sophina

Check this out.

Scarlett

Where did you get that mom?

Sophina

It is kind of complicated.

April
May I see?

Sophina
Here you go.

April
Wow. I have never seen a gold pen before.

Sophina
Have you noticed the gold ink in every prison cell?

Scarlett
Yes. Echelon is not happy about it.

Sophina
I am glad Echelon is not happy because I am the one doing it.

April
You are S Nice?

Sophina
Yep.

Scarlett
Space.

Champion
How did you have time to write on every wall in every cell of a prison with over one million cells?

S Nice
The pen is magical.

Champion

Can you deliver a hidden message to the prisoners?

S Nice

I will try. What do you want me to tell them?

Champion

Tell them to...

Narrator

Champion tells S Nice what to tell the people. S Nice begins thinking of how to deliver a hidden message in her poems. She writes a poem and titles it "Fall."

Fall

Saxophones become rusty during fall. The windpipes become rusty most of all. In the fall, the leaves change color, but the leaves are not alone. These changes come together and affect the saxophone. Saxophones come in several shapes and sizes, but the fall will affect them all. Saxophones become rusty during fall. S Nice.

ARCHIVE THREE – Path to Freedom

I. Rockets

Champion

What was that?

S Nice

There is nothing to worry about. It is just the nightly cleaners. They are responsible for cleaning all the prison cells.

Champion

What if they come in here?

S Nice

They only clean empty cells. As long as I do not touch Scarlett or April, they will see me in the cell and move on.

Champion

We will sit toward the back and stay invisible.

Narrator

The cleaners begin cleaning the cells. Like the previous day, the cleaners are working as a team. There are three cleaners. After thirty minutes, they come to S Nice's cell. They see her inside and move on.

Prisoner

Hello there handsome.

Cleaner

Hello.

Prisoner

You must be exhausted after cleaning all these cells.

Cleaner

It is better than working outside in the ditch.

Prisoner

I would give you a massage if these bars were not in between us.

Narrator

“What is Prisoner doing?” S Nice thinks.

Cleaner

I could use a massage.

Prisoner

I would love to give you one. Open my cell and come inside.

Narrator

Cleaner looks for his coworkers. They are near the end of the cell block.

Cleaner

A quick massage will not hurt.

Narrator

He opens her cell and goes in. Prisoner begins giving him a shoulder rub.

Prisoner

How does that feel?

Cleaner

It feels great.

Narrator

Prisoner locates Cleaner's keys on his waist belt. They are tightly secured. Trying to physically subdue Cleaner is dangerous because his coworkers are not far away. "How can I get his keys without anyone noticing?" She wonders.

Prisoner

Your waist belt is going to get in the way.

Narrator

She softly whispers into his ear.

Cleaner

How is my waist belt going to get in the way of my shoulders?

Prisoner

Your waist belt is going to get in the way of your happy ending?

Cleaner

You are going to tell me a story? I guess that is okay as long as it is a quick story. How is my waist belt going to get in the way of your story?

Narrator

Prisoner begins sucking on Cleaner's neck.

Prisoner

You will be much more comfortable without your waist belt.

Cleaner

My waist belt is made of polyester. It is very comfortable. What story are you going to tell me?

Prisoner

I am not going to tell you a story.

Cleaner

Why not? You said you would give me a happy ending if I removed my waist belt.

Prisoner

I will give you a happy ending once you remove it.

Cleaner

I do not understand why I have to remove it.

Prisoner

If you remove it, I will be able to slide my hand down your pants.

Cleaner

Why would you do that? I am not hiding anything in my pants.

Narrator

“This kid just does not get it.” She thinks. She loosens his waist belt and slides her hand down his pants.

Cleaner

What are you looking for? I am not hiding anything. What does this have to do with my story?

Prisoner

I am looking for Junior.

Cleaner

Who is Junior, and why would Junior be in my pants?

Prisoner

I need you to relax.

Cleaner

I am trying to relax, but you still have not told me my...

Narrator

Prisoner finds Junior.

Prisoner

I need you to remove your waist belt. Can you do that for me?

Cleaner

Yes.

Narrator

His blood pressure is sky high.

Prisoner

Good boy.

Narrator

Cleaner is sitting on the floor with his back against the wall. Prisoner is straddling Cleaner in reverse.

Prisoner

I need you to take your hands and squeeze my ass. Can you do that for me?

Cleaner

Yes.

Narrator

Cleaner is panting like a dog.

Prisoner

Good boy.

Narrator

Prisoner is now straddling Cleaner facing forward.

Prisoner

I need you to take your hands and squeeze my breasts. Can you do that for me?

Cleaner

Yes.

Prisoner

Good boy.

Narrator

She seductively whispers into his ear.

Prisoner

How do my breasts feel?

Cleaner

They feel really good.

Narrator

Cleaner looks like he is about to pass out.

Prisoner

With your left hand, keep squeezing my breasts. With your right hand, give me your keys. Can you do that for me?

Cleaner

Yes.

Narrator

Cleaner hands Prisoner his keys.

Prisoner
Good boy.

Narrator
Cleaner is losing his mind.

Prisoner
I want you to explode. Can you do that for me?

Cleaner
Yes.

Narrator
Prisoner uses both hands to play with Junior. Within one minute, Junior explodes. Prisoner uses her left hand to cover Cleaner's mouth as Junior explodes. Once it is safe, she removes her hand from his mouth.

Prisoner
Good boy.

Narrator
Cleaner is trying to catch his breath.

Prisoner
I need you to stay here until I come back. Can you do that for me?

Cleaner
Yes.

Prisoner
Good boy.

Narrator

Prisoner exits the cell and locks Cleaner inside. She immediately runs to S Nice's cell.

Prisoner
S Nice, we have to hurry.

Narrator
She whispers.

S Nice
How did you get out?

Prisoner
I will explain later. Right now, we need to get out of here.

Narrator
Prisoner uses the keys to open S Nice's cell. She does not realize it was already unlocked.

Prisoner
Come on. What are you waiting for?

Narrator
S Nice has to think fast. The other cleaners will find Cleaner any minute.

S Nice
I need to show you something. Come here.

Prisoner
I had to turn a trick to escape my cell. I am not going back in one. Are you coming or not?

S Nice
Scarlett, can you come here please?

Narrator

Scarlett walks to the front of the cell.

S Nice

Now you see me. Now you do not.

Narrator

S Nice holds Scarlett hand and she becomes invisible.

Prisoner faints. S Nice reaches through the cell and catches her. She pulls her inside.

Prisoner

How did you disappear?

S Nice

A dream fairy gave Scarlett magic rings that make her, and anyone she touches, become invisible.

Scarlett

We are going to use them to escape.

Narrator

Scarlett exclaims.

S Nice

I need to release the other prisoners before the cleaners find Cleaner locked in your cell.

Prisoner

I will help you.

Narrator

S Nice, Scarlett, and Prisoner release the two other prisoners and bring them to S Nice's cell. Within seconds from returning, the cleaners find Cleaner locked in Prisoner's cell.

Cleaner 2
What the hell are you doing?

Cleaner
I am being a good boy.

Cleaner 3
What are you talking about?

Cleaner
If I am a good boy, I will be rewarded.

Cleaner 2
You are acting weird. Maybe you should stay in there until you get your act together.

Cleaner 3
How did you lock yourself inside?

Cleaner
I did not lock myself inside. Prisoner did.

Cleaner 2
Prisoner is out?

Cleaner
She said she would be right back. I am going to wait for her like a good boy.

Cleaner 3
I do not know what Prisoner did to you, but you need to snap out of it.

Narrator
Cleaner 3 opens the cell.

Cleaner 3
Come on. Let us go look for Prisoner.

Cleaner
I cannot leave the cell.

Cleaner 2
You are coming with us whether you like it or not.

Cleaner
No I am not.

Narrator
Cleaner 2 and Cleaner 3 begin struggling with Cleaner.
They try pulling him out of the cell.

Cleaner 3
Stop fighting with us.

Cleaner 2
Come on man. What is wrong with you?

Cleaner
I am just trying to be a good boy. I need you to respect that!

Narrator
They struggle for a couple minutes and give up.

Cleaner 2
Have it your way. Stay in the cell. When Echelon sees you not working, you will be demoted.

Narrator

Cleaner 2 and Cleaner 3 go look for Prisoner. They fail to find her. They also fail to find the other two prisoners. They begin to panic. They summon Echelon.

Echelon
How could you let this happen?

Narrator
Echelon shouts.

Cleaner 2
They were gone when we got here.

Echelon
Show me.

Narrator
They walk by S Nice's cell, and Prisoner is startled. She lets out a short scream. Echelon and the cleaners stop and look inside S Nice's cell.

Echelon
Is someone in there?

Narrator
Echelon says as he looks inside. He cannot see anyone.

Cleaner 3
It must be an echo from another cell.

Narrator
They come to Prisoner's cell. Cleaner is still inside.

Echelon
Cleaner, what are you doing?

Cleaner

I cannot leave the cell. Do what you must.

Echelon

Who told you that you could not leave?

Cleaner

Prisoner did.

Echelon

Consider yourself demoted to prisoner. Make yourself comfortable because this cell is your new home. You will rot and die in this dark cell.

Narrator

Echelon locks Cleaner inside the cell.

Echelon

I am declaring a code red.

Narrator

Echelon and the cleaners exit the prison. Cleaner lowers his head and begins sobbing. His heart has been broken. He sits and sobs in the dark cell. Prisoner can hear Cleaner. She begins feeling guilty for taking advantage of him.

Prisoner

That kid does not deserve to be locked in this prison forever. I feel bad. He looks like he is only thirteen or fourteen years old.

S Nice

You should be ashamed of yourself. You took the poor kid's virginity.

Prisoner

I am ashamed of myself, but I did not take his virginity. I would never do that. I just gave him a happy ending.

Scarlett

Mom, what is a happy ending?

Narrator

S Nice, Champion, and Prisoner did not expect such a question.

S Nice

It is kind of like playing baseball.

Champion

Exactly. Think of baseball and balloons.

Narrator

Scarlett looks confused.

S Nice

Think of a rocket ship. Um...

Champion

A rocket ship and a glass of milk. So, you see what we are trying to say?

Scarlett

No.

Narrator

April tries to help.

April

In order to understand happy endings Scarlett, you have to understand boys. Boys are idiots. Boys will be boys.

Boys have rockets in their pockets. Most importantly, boys live and die to shoot their rockets. Do you understand?

Scarlett

I get it. Boys have a rocket in their pocket, and shooting it makes them happy.

April

Yep.

Narrator

S Nice, Champion, and Prisoner stare at April.

April

Hold on to your horses. I am not speaking from experience.

Prisoner

I am going to release him from the cell.

Champion

Hold on. What if he does not cooperate?

Narrator

Prisoner looks at Champion with a “duh” face. After several seconds, Champion gets why Prisoner is looking at him with a “duh” face.

Champion

Never mind.

Narrator

Prisoner goes to meet Cleaner.

Cleaner

I knew you would come back. I waited for you like a good boy.

Narrator

Prisoner unlocks the cell. She walks inside. She places one finger over her mouth, gesturing Cleaner to be quiet. He shakes his head yes. She pulls his pants down and drops to her knees. She has a talk with Junior. Her balloons join the conversation. After several minutes, Cleaner shoots his rocket.

Prisoner

I need you to follow me.

Cleaner

Yes ma'am.

S Nice

What took you so long?

Prisoner

I wanted to make sure it was safe.

Narrator

She says as she gives Cleaner a wink.

Champion

We cannot afford to waste any more time. We do not know how long April and Scarlett's magic rings will work. We need to escape while we still can.

Cleaner

I know the perfect way out.

Champion

You do?

Cleaner
Yeah.

Champion
Okay then. We will follow you.

II. Leap of Faith

S Nice

Remember to stay close. We have to stay connected to April and Scarlett to remain invisible.

Narrator

S Nice, Champion, Prisoner, Prisoner 2, Prisoner 3, Cleaner, Scarlett, and April exit the cell. They follow Cleaner to a garbage disposal.

Cleaner

I hope everyone knows how to swim.

April

Do you know where you are going?

Cleaner

I am a cleaner, remember? This garbage disposal connects to an abandoned river.

Champion

How do you know for sure?

Cleaner

I fell through the garbage disposal before. It was an accident. Is everyone ready?

Narrator

They jump in the garbage disposal one at a time. It is like sliding down a waterslide full of urine and liquid poop.

April

Oh my god. It smells terrible in here.

Narrator

Scarlett starts gagging.

S Nice
Are you okay?

Scarlett
I think some poop got in my mouth.

Cleaner
Make yourselves comfortable because it is going to be a long ride.

Prisoner
I wish you would have told us that before.

Cleaner
Heads up!

Narrator
The garbage disposal is connected to trash openings above. It is from above that the trash, sewage, and human waste is disposed. A splash of poop lands on S Nice.

S Nice
Really?

Narrator
She shouts. She looks at Cleaner, demanding an explanation.

Scarlett
April, are you doing...

Narrator
Just as Scarlett says that, April throws up in her face.

April
Sorry.

Narrator
Scarlett starts crying.

Scarlett
Shit.

Narrator
She shouts.

S Nice
Watch your mouth.

Scarlett
April threw up in my mouth.

S Nice
A little bit of throw up never hurt anybody.

April
My stomach feels messed up.

Narrator
April throws up again. This time, she throws up in
Scarlett's hair.

Scarlett
April! Stop throwing up on me.

April
I cannot help it.

Cleaner
We are almost there. Brace yourselves for impact.

Narrator

The group emerges from the garbage disposal and lands in a river. The river is green and smells like a wet dog and a skunk's vagina.

Scarlett

It burns.

Champion

Everyone get out quick. This river may be toxic.

Narrator

The group swims to shore.

S Nice

We need to find some fresh water so we can clean up.

Champion

There used to be steam ponds north of those mountains.

S Nice

Do you think they are still there?

Champion

This place has changed a lot since I was here, but they might still be there.

S Nice

It is worth a shot. It is not like we can bathe in this toxic river.

Champion

Okay then. We are headed north.

Prisoner

This place looks worse than the inside of the prison.

Champion

It did not always look this way.

Prisoner

How did it used to look?

Champion

It looked like paradise. There were many more trees. The rivers were not green. The rivers were clear as crystal. It never used to be foggy. It was always sunny and clear. You used to be able to see the sky. The sky was blue with purple and white swirls. There were millions of colorful flowers. Some were small and some were quite large. Life was abundant. Rivers, like this one, would be full of colorful angel fish. The people were friendly and never polluted the planet. It is a shame to see such a nice place turn into a dump.

Scarlett

How much further do we have to go? I need to clean my hair and wash my mouth about twenty times.

Champion

It is hard for me to say. You will know we are close once you see the caves.

April

There are caves?

Champion

There are many caves. Some of them go underground.

April

I have never been in a real cave before.

Champion

Then today is your lucky day because that is where we will be sleeping.

S Nice

Are the caves dangerous?

Champion

To be honest, weedles often reside in caves.

S Nice

What is a weedle?

Champion

Weedles are strange creatures. They are carnivores. They have four legs and two heads. Each head has three rows of teeth. Each tooth is four inches long. They have razor sharp claws. Their back is covered in spikes. They have green eyes. They are larger and heavier than a grizzly bear. Their skin is black with green stripes. They whistle when they are angry.

S Nice

We cannot be safe in the caves if the weedles will be there.

Champion

We will if they cannot see us. Under the circumstances, I think the caves are the safest place. If we stick together, we will be fine.

April

We may have a small problem.

Champion

What is it?

April
I cannot find my ring.

Narrator
The group stops dead in their tracks.

Scarlett
How could you lose it if it was on your finger?

April
I do not know. I never took it off.

Scarlett
Well, at least we have...

Narrator
Scarlett freezes.

April
You still have yours, right?

Champion
Please tell me you have yours Scarlett.

Scarlett
My ring is missing too.

Champion
We will simply have to find a cave underground. Weedles do not go underground. It will not be easy, but it is our only option.

Prisoner
Are those the caves?

Champion

It looks like it.

Narrator

The group continues on their path. A thick fog covers the terrain. Pollution covers the sky. A sharp stench fills the air. They come to a wall of boulder rocks.

Champion

We have to climb these rocks. Be careful and watch your step.

Narrator

They climb the thirty foot wall of boulder rocks. In the center, there is a large pool of steaming water. They all jump in.

Scarlett

What makes the water hot?

Champion

There are volcanos not too far from here. The volcanic activity causes hot spots in the surrounding land. This is one of the hotspots.

Narrator

The group spends an hour at the steam pond. The steam pond is refreshing. It seems too hot for comfort at first until one gets used to it, which only takes about five minutes. It feels like sitting in a Jacuzzi.

Champion

We should keep moving. We need to find a cave underground. I know everyone's clothes are wet, but at least they are clean. They will dry by the night.

Narrator

All of the sudden, there is space craft headed their way. It is moving fast.

Champion

Everyone get back in the steam pond and stay low!

Narrator

They all jump back in. The space craft flies right over their heads. It slams into the ground about fifty feet away. Champion climbs out the pond and discreetly observes the ship wreck. Two individuals emerge from the ship. The fog is making it difficult to see.

Champion

I am going to get a closer look. You guys stay low.

Narrator

Champion proceeds closer and hides himself behind a boulder rock. The two individuals appear to be human. Champion remains hidden. The individuals both fall to the ground. Champion continues to observe. "It may be a trap," he thinks. A weedle emerges from the forest and begins to stalk the individuals. It is moving closer by the second. It is a full grown weedle. Champion is convinced that this is not a trap. He runs back to the group.

Champion

I am going down to the ship. There are two individuals who need my help. They are about to be attacked by a weedle.

S Nice

I will help you.

Champion

I will distract the weedle. I need you to pull the individuals back into their ship.

S Nice

What if the weedle attacks you?

Champion

Then I will attack it back.

Narrator

“Champion is pluto,” S Nice thinks.

Champion

Once I get the weedle’s attention, I want you to run down and pull the individuals to safety.

Narrator

Champion runs down and starts making noise.

Champion

Over here weedle. Over here. If you want me, come get me.

Narrator

The voracious weedle alters its course and pursues Champion.

Champion

Come and get me.

Narrator

As the weedle hunts Champion, S Nice runs to the individuals.

S Nice

Get up. You are in danger.

Narrator

The individuals do not respond.

S Nice

Get up. I cannot carry both of you.

Narrator

S Nice takes one individual and starts dragging him back to the ship. The extra space gear makes the individual heavier than normal. Finally, S Nice gets him on the ship. She starts to rescue the other individual, but he is now surrounded by four weedles. She takes her pen and draws a person on the ship's front door. She closes the door and climbs on top of the ship. She hopes Champion will be able to save the individual if she distracts the weedles.

S Nice

Over here.

Narrator

The weedles ignore her.

S Nice

I said over here.

Narrator

The weedles do not flinch.

S Nice

Here goes nothing.

Narrator

She says as she jumps down. She runs near the weedles. She comes within twenty feet from them.

S Nice

I said over here!

Narrator

She gets all four weedles' attention. They immediately chase after her. S Nice sprints as fast as she can. The weedles are gaining on her. S Nice has no chance against four weedles if they catch her. One of the weedles is within three feet from S Nice. It swipes at her with its claws. It tears S Nice's shirt and barely misses her. S Nice jumps on top of the space ship. The weedles slash at the front door as they try to climb up. They scratch and claw at S Nice's artwork. They begin whistling loudly. They slam their bodies into the front door. This causes the ship to rock. S Nice holds on for her life. They continue clawing, scratching, and slamming into the front door. S Nice has nowhere to go. She is trapped. The weedles are tearing the ship apart. S Nice hopes Champion is okay. She hopes the weedles lose interest in her. There is no sign of Champion, and the weedles are becoming angrier. Their whistling is piercing S Nice's ears. She tries to cover her ears with one hand and hold on with the other hand. Just as she does this, the weedles slam into the ship once more. This time, S Nice is unable to hold on. She falls off and slams on the ground. The weedles surround her. She is surrounded by four weedles and eight heads. The whistling is unbearable. She is about to be eaten alive. Her eyes are shut. She uses her hands to cover her ears. The weedles torment her by sniffing her body. They growl in her ears. Suddenly, the whistling stops. S Nice prepares for the worst. She can sense their heads surrounding her. She can smell their fowl breathe.

S Nice

I am not afraid. You can kill my body, but you cannot kill my soul.

Narrator

She removes her hands from her ears. She awaits her death. She opens her eyes. All four weedles are now solid gold statues. They stand lifelessly over S Nice's body.

Champion

S Nice! Are you okay?

Narrator

He says as he races to meet her.

Champion

Did these statues come from the ship? They look extremely realistic.

S Nice

That is because they are real weedles. They almost killed me.

Champion

Are you telling me these things are real?

S Nice

That is exactly what I am saying.

Champion

That is hard to believe. How did they become statues?

S Nice

I do not know. All I can tell you is that they almost killed me.

Champion

Maybe the dream fairies had something to do with it. I am going to get the others.

Narrator

Champion runs to get the other group members. He brings them all to the space craft.

Champion

I want everyone inside the ship. This is where we will be sleeping tonight.

III. Cheers

Scarlett

Are you telling me the statues outside are real?

S Nice

Yes.

Scarlett

Are you okay mom?

S Nice

I think so.

Prisoner

Let me take a look at your arm.

Champion

I will be fine. This is nothing.

Prisoner

I am not asking you. I am telling you. I am a registered nurse. If you let that arm go unattended, it could get infected. We cannot afford to have you losing an arm. Take your shirt off. Sit down, and let me fix you up.

Champion

Yes ma'am.

Narrator

Prisoner finds a first aid kit. She cleans and bandages Champion's arm.

Champion

Thank you. My arm feels a lot better.

Prisoner
You are welcome.

Champion
What is your name?

Prisoner
My name is Wendy.

S Nice
They are waking up.

Wendy
Put them on the bed so I can take a look at them.

Narrator
Champion starts to get up. Wendy places her hand on his chest.

Wendy
Where do you think you are going? You need to rest your arm.

Narrator
Champion sits back down.

Wendy
Let me help.

Narrator
S Nice, Wendy, Prisoner 2, and Prisoner 3 lift the individuals onto the bed. As they wake up, they become startled.

Individual
Who are you?

Narrator
He shouts.

S Nice
We are your friends. We are here to help. I am human too.

Narrator
The individuals examine S Nice.

Individual 2
All I remember is slamming into the ground.

S Nice
You were nearly eaten by weedles. We saved you and brought you back to your ship.

Individual 2
You saved us?

Individual
Why would you do that? You do not even know us.

S Nice
We did it because it was the right thing to do. Maybe someone will need your help one day, and you can return the favor.

Wendy
My name is Wendy. I am a registered nurse. I would like to examine you for injuries.

Individual
Okay.

Narrator

Wendy examines both individuals. Luckily, they have no broken bones or major injuries. They just have some minor bruising.

Champion

What are you doing on Stanton Island?

Individual

We stole this space ship and came here to escape the invasion.

Champion

We did the same thing.

Individual 2

Are you from Lotus too?

Champion

As a matter of fact, we are.

Individual 2

We barely escaped.

Champion

How did you know about Stanton Island?

Individual 2

We did not know about it. Our engines failed, and we crashed here my mistake.

Champion

It is a good thing that we found you first.

Individual 2

Why do you say that?

Champion

This planet is run by the Saxons. They captured us shortly after we landed and threw us in prison. We just escaped today.

Individual

We are glad you did. If you did not escape, we would be dead right now.

Champion

What is the status of your food supply?

Individual

We have plenty of food. This ship was stocked for twenty passengers for a three day journey.

Champion

Good. Can you show Wendy and S Nice where the food is?

Individual

Certainly.

Champion

I want you to bring enough food for everyone. We will eat together and get to know each other a little better.

Narrator

They retrieve enough for everyone and bring it back to the group.

Champion

Break everything on the table.

S Nice

Let us say grace.

Scarlett
I will say grace mom.

S Nice
Okay Scarlett.

Scarlett
Everyone please bow your head.

Narrator
Everyone, including April, bows their head.

Scarlett
God, we thank you for the food we are about to receive.
We ask that you continue to provide for us and protect us.
Thank you for saving my mom and my friend, Champion,
from the weedles. I pray the weedles become extinct.
Amen.

S Nice
Everyone dig in.

Narrator
Space food has improved over the centuries. It is actually
fairly good. It tastes like the frozen dinners people used to
cook in old fashion microwaves.

Individual
I have a surprise. I will be right back.

April
I love surprises.

Scarlett

Me too. Sometimes I cannot wait to know what it is. My mom says I have to be patient. I try to be patient, but it is difficult. Why is he taking so long?

S Nice
Scarlett.

Scarlett
I meant to say that he can take as much time as he wants to.

Narrator
She says as she bubbles with excitement.

Individual
Here we are.

Individual 2
I did not know we had those.

Narrator
Individual passes the alcoholic beverages around.

Individual
I would like to make a toast.

Narrator
Everyone raises their glass.

Individual
To new beginnings.

Everyone
To new beginnings.

Narrator

The group continues to eat and drink. They become drunk.
Prisoner 2 is giving Individual a lap dance.

S Nice
Cover your eyes Scarlett.

Narrator
Scarlett covers her eyes but looks through her hands.

S Nice
I said cover your eyes.

Narrator
She says as she pinches Scarlett.

Scarlett
Ouch.

S Nice
Get a room. There are children present.

Narrator
Prisoner 2 and Individual go to the back. Prisoner 3 and
Individual 2 also go to the back. They are followed by
Cleaner and Wendy.

Scarlett
I do not think it is fair that boys have rockets. I want a
rocket.

S Nice
No you do not Scarlett.

Scarlett
It seems like it would be fun. Can I have one?

S Nice
No you cannot!

Scarlett
That is not fair.

S Nice
It is very fair. I do not want to hear any more talk about rockets. Is that clear?

Scarlett
Yes.

Narrator
Scarlett says disappointingly.

Champion
How are your messages going S Nice?

S Nice
I sent one yesterday.

Champion
Good. I want you to send another by tonight. I am going to get some rest. If you hear anything strange, do not hesitate to wake me up.

S Nice
Okay.

Narrator
Champion lies on the sofa near the ship's entrance.

Champion
I forgot to ask them if they had weapons.

Narrator

Champion goes to the back. He covers his eyes.

Champion

I do not mean to disturb you, but I need to know if you have any weapons on board.

Individual

Of course we do. This way.

Prisoner 2

Do not keep me waiting. If you do, I am going to spank you. I am going to spank you like the bitch that you are.

Narrator

“This woman is going to kill me,” Individual thinks.
Champion follows him through the corridor to the weapons.

Champion

That is a lot of weapons.

Individual

I know, right?

Champion

This must be a fighter ship.

Individual

You have all the weapons you need. If you will excuse me, my lady is waiting.

Champion

By all means, you are dismissed soldier. Divide and conquer.

Individual

Yes sir.

Narrator

Individual is white boy wasted. He gives Champion a salute and then runs off. He slams right into a wall.

Individual

That was not there before, was it?

Champion

It was.

Narrator

Champion selects several high powered rifles. He helps himself to some armor as well. He puts the armor on and walks back to the front of the ship.

S Nice

How many weapons do you need?

April

I would not want to mess with you.

Scarlett

Can I try a weapon?

S Nice

Absolutely not.

Scarlett

No rocket. No weapon. The guys have all the fun.

Champion

I am going to get some rest. As I said before, do not hesitate to wake me up if you hear anything strange.

Narrator

Champion lies down on the sofa and places the rifle over his chest.

S Nice

Scarlett, you and April can share the bed. I will sleep in this chair.

Scarlett

Mom, please sleep with us. We can all fit.

April

I would feel better if you slept with us S Nice. We need to keep our eye on you. We do not want you running off and fighting weedles during the night.

S Nice

Give me a couple of minutes. I have to write a poem. I will join you once I am finished.

Narrator

S Nice ponders how to deliver the next message. She titles it, "Trash."

Trash

What can trash do for you? Trash can make your life miserable. Trash can turn misery to miracles. Trash can lead you down a path. The path can lead you to a river. The river flows from a stream and separates you from everything. Do not ask what trash can do for you? Ask what you can do for trash. You must properly dispose it. You must ponder its path. Your biggest leap of faith will be your leap into the trash. Submerge yourself in it. Follow its path. S Nice.

Narrator

S Nice climbs into the bed with Scarlett and April.

IV. False Alarm

Sergeant

Captain Champion, you are needed at once.

Champion

What is it?

Sergeant

There are insurgents in the east. They are burning everything in their path.

Champion

Shields?

Sergeant

Shields are at forty percent.

Champion

Weapons?

Sergeant

Weapons are at ninety percent.

Champion

Redirect twenty percent of our weapons to our shields. We are going to play a little game.

Sergeant

A game sir?

Champion

Affirmative. We are going to play chicken.

Sergeant

I am not familiar with that game.

Champion

The game is simple. Whoever moves first loses.

Sergeant

What if they do not move?

Champion

They will move. Their captain is a coward. Only a coward would kill innocent woman and children.

Sergeant

You heard the captain. Set a collision course for their ship.

Narrator

The crew has complete confidence in Champion's judgment. He has led them to hundreds of victories.

Sergeant

What now?

Champion

Now we wait.

Narrator

They await Champion's orders.

Sergeant

Thirty seconds until collision.

Champion

Stand by for weapons.

S 2

Weapons standing by.

Sergeant

Twenty seconds until collision.

Champion

Wait for it.

Sergeant

Ten seconds until collision.

Champion

I want full throttle to steering. Spin one hundred eighty degrees to the left.

Narrator

The space ship spins around. It now has its rear facing the impeding ship.

Champion

Pull up you crazy bastard.

Narrator

The other ship moves at the last second.

Champion

Fire!

Narrator

With the other ship's rear exposed, they are able to destroy its engines. This causes a chain reaction. The ship explodes and is destroyed. The crew members celebrate.

S 3

What now captain?

Champion

Take us home.

Narrator

The crew shouts, “Champion. Champion. Champion.”

Scarlett

Champion. Champion. Champion. Wake up Champion.

Narrator

Champion wakes up in battle mode.

Champion

Set a perimeter. What is our status? Why are you not in uniform soldier?

Scarlett

I am not a soldier. I am a little girl.

Narrator

Champion snaps out of it.

Champion

Oh. Well, what is the problem?

Scarlett

One of our crew members is being attacked.

Narrator

Champion jumps up. He follows Scarlett to a room in the back.

Scarlett

Someone is hurting her. Why are you just standing there?

Champion

She is fine. She is not being hurt.

Scarlett

Then why is she screaming and saying “Oh God?”

Narrator

Champion is not sure how to answer.

Scarlett

Let me guess. They are playing with a rocket.

Champion

Yes.

Scarlett

This sucks. The adults have all the fun. I cannot wait until I get my own rocket.

Champion

Do not let your mother hear you say that.

Scarlett

Whatever.

Narrator

She pouts.

Champion

Come on.

Narrator

Champion walks Scarlett back to bed.

Champion

You did the right thing by waking me up. If you hear anything else, let me know.

Scarlett

I will.

Champion
Good night Scarlett.

Scarlett
Good night.

V. Dreamland

Friend

See you tomorrow Scarlett.

Scarlett

Okay. See you tomorrow.

Narrator

Scarlett has just gotten out of school. Her school is in a tall building. The building has two hundred floors.

Sometimes, the students have to wait for half an hour just to catch an elevator. Scarlet is in a rush. Her gymnastics class is in fifteen minutes. She does not want to be late.

There is an elevator that no one seems to be using. She wonders why not. It looks just like the other elevators.

Why would they pass it up? She forces her way through the crowd. She enters the elevator. Before she is able to select the floor she wants, the elevator drops straight down. It is in free fall.

Scarlett

Help!

Narrator

The elevator flips violently as it falls. Scarlett's feet stay glued to the ground. She cannot move. The elevator is falling ten stories per second. When it hits the ground, Scarlett will be crushed. The lights in the elevator flicker on and off. Scarlett cannot see a thing. The elevator stops abruptly.

Elevator

You have reached the one thousandth floor.

Narrator

Calming elevator music plays as the door opens. Scarlett is greeted by Pascha.

Pascha

Hello Scarlett. Would you like some hot chocolate? I brew it myself using organic Omega 4 coco beans.

Scarlett

Sure. I will have some.

Narrator

Pascha hands Scarlett a cup of hot coco. She pours whip cream on top.

Scarlett

I am confused.

Pascha

About what?

Scarlett

I was falling. How did I get to the one thousandth floor?

Pascha

You were falling up not down.

Narrator

Scarlett is unsure how to respond to such a contradiction.

Pascha

I apologize for the bumpy ride. We have been meaning to get that elevator fixed.

Scarlett

Where am I?

Pascha
You are here.

Scarlett
Where is here?

Pascha
Here is where you are.

Scarlett
Where is where you are?

Pascha
The question is not where is where you are. Where is where you are not is the question.

Scarlett
Okay.

Narrator
She says as she pulls her hair.

Pascha
We are not in Julius Galaxy.

Scarlett
Then where are we?

Pascha
This is where the dream fairies live. Welcome to Dreamland.

Scarlett
Will I be able to find my way back?

Pascha

Maybe. Maybe not. That is what makes life exciting. You never know for sure.

Narrator

Pascha and Scarlett stop at a shoe store.

Pascha

What size shoes do you wear?

Scarlett

I am a size seven.

Pascha

I need a size eight for me and a size seven for my friend.

Clerk

You got it.

Narrator

Pascha hands Scarlett cloud shoes. The shoes are made of clouds and have wings.

Pascha

Make sure you tie them tight. The shoes try to run away sometimes.

Narrator

Scarlett wrestles with the cloud shoes and tries to put them on.

Pascha

You got yourself some stubborn shoes.

Scarlett

How am I supposed to put these shoes on?

Pascha

Try to be nice to them. Talk to them a little bit before you try to put them on.

Scarlett

Please go on my feet and stop trying to run away. My feet are clean.

Narrator

Scarlett's shoes stop moving and allow her to put them on.

Pascha

Are you ready?

S Nice

Wait for me.

Scarlett

Mom, how did you get here?

S Nice

I took the elevator.

Pascha

What size shoes do you wear?

S Nice

An eight will be fine.

Scarlett

Mom, talk to the shoes before you try to put them on.

S Nice

What should I say?

Scarlett

Tell them your feet are clean.

S Nice

Hello shoes. My feet are clean.

Narrator

S Nice is able to put the shoes on with no problem.

Pascha

Okay. Is everyone ready to...

April

Wait for me.

Pascha

I need one more pair of shoes please. She looks like a size seven. Am I right?

April

Yep.

Narrator

Scarlett gives April the same advice she gave S Nice. April puts her shoes on with no problem. Pascha looks to see if anyone else is coming. She waits for a minute.

Pascha

Okay. Is everybody ready to...

Wendy

Wait for me.

Narrator

Scarlett repeats her advice. Wendy gets her shoes on.

Pascha

We should hurry up and go before someone else...

Akeeba

Wait for me.

Scarlett

It is my aunt. Hello aunty.

Akeeba

Hey guys. What is everyone doing in the clouds?

S Nice

I am not sure yet.

Pascha

Another pair please.

Narrator

Same advice. Same results.

Pascha

That is it. No one else.

Narrator

The group flies above the clouds and enters the gates of Dreamland.

Pascha

Welcome to Dreamland. In Dreamland, all your wildest dreams can come true. This is where the dream fairies live. Feel free to look around. I want everyone to meet back here in one hour.

Engineer

All aboard.

Narrator

The group boards the train.

Engineer

What brings you lovely folks to Dreamland?

April

Curiosity.

Engineer

Good. Curiosity is good. To the left, you will see the Maize of Wonders. Many people have died in there.

April

They died?

Engineer

No. I am just pulling your leg.

Narrator

He says as he laughs and pulls the train horn.

Engineer

Coming up, to the right, is Nightmare Penitentiary. When the dream fairies catch nightmares, they are sentenced to life and thrown in the pen.

Akeeba

It sounds like a scary place.

Engineer

It would be a bad place to take a nap that is for sure.

Narrator

He says as he laughs and pulls the train horn twice.

Engineer

There is so much to see and so little time. I am going to drop you off near the market. You should be able to see a lot in the short time that you have. I will pick you up in forty five minutes and take you back to meet Pascha.

Narrator

The group jumps out the train.

Wendy

There is a chocolate store.

Akeeba

I am right behind you.

Narrator

Wendy and Akeeba cross the street and enter the chocolate store.

Akeeba

How much are the chocolate caramel bars?

Fairy

They are free.

Akeeba

Really?

Wendy

What about the chocolate swirl waffle cones?

Fairy

They are free too.

Narrator

Akeeba and Wendy are on cloud nine.

Akeeba

What about...

Fairy

Let me save you some time. It is all free. Everything in the store is free. All the chocolate you could ever want. It is all free.

Narrator

Fairy starts singing a song about the chocolate being free. Other fairies join in. Wendy and Akeeba also join in. They sing and eat as much chocolate as their stomachs can take.

S Nice

Look Scarlett. There is an art museum.

Scarlett

Let us go mom. April, do you want to come?

April

I love art.

Narrator

They walk into the art museum.

Clerk

How does the painting make you feel?

S Nice

It looks like the artist was experiencing happiness and heartache at the same time.

Clerk

He was experiencing love. Feel free to enter any painting you would like.

S Nice

How can we enter a painting?

Clerk

Enter it the same way you entered this museum. You are able to enter and exit as many times as you wish. We also have paint brushes if you would like to paint and enter your own painting.

Narrator

The group enters as many paintings as possible. S Nice paints a race track and a few cars. She also paints audience members and fans.

S Nice

Ready to race?

Narrator

They enter S Nice's painting. Once inside a painting, one is able to see outside the painting. One can even see people looking at the painting.

S Nice

I wonder where the boys are.

Cleaner

Shake it fairy. Shake it.

Individual

Damn. Fairy got back.

Individual 2

She get it from her mama.

Champion

How much for a lap dance?

Narrator

Champion asks a fairy wearing a g string bikini.

Fairy

Lap dances are free.

Champion

I will take one for me and all my friends. Keep them coming.

Narrator

Fairy calls three other fairies. Champion, Cleaner, Individual, and Individual 2 receive nonstop topless lap dances for forty five minutes.

Cleaner

We must be in Arcadia.

Individual

I could stay here forever.

Champion

We have to meet the girls and Pascha.

Cleaner

They do not even know we are here.

Champion

The fairy glitter will blow our cover. We should just meet them now and get it over with.

Individual

We can say the fairies beat us up. That would explain all the fairy glitter.

Champion

Good idea. Unless anyone has a better idea, we will say we were mugged by dream fairies.

Narrator

Everyone agrees and starts making their way back to meet Pascha.

S Nice

Why are all of you covered in fairy glitter?

Narrator

The men remain silent.

S Nice

You are not fooling me. I know where you went.

Wendy

I think the glitter looks good on them.

Pascha

To the dream castle we go.

Narrator

Pascha accompanies the group down a red ruby road. They come to a spectacular castle.

Fairy

Hello Pascha.

Pascha

Hello Fairy.

Narrator

Fairy allows the group to pass and enter the castle. The castle is decorated with red rubies and jewels. The high ceilings are adorned with large glorious chandeliers. The foyer is occupied by a marble fountain. The fountain flows with water and blue lava. The floor is glazed with multicolored pebbles. The walls are covered in large portraits of dreams. Each dream has a fairy's name attached to it.

April
Who painted these?

Fairy
They are not paintings. They are dreams.

April
What does the name on the bottom mean?

Fairy
That is the fairy who created the dream.

Narrator
The group enters a large banquet hall. There is a stage in the front. Chairs and tables fill the hall.

Fairy
Here we are. Kevin will be right in. Make yourselves comfortable.

Narrator
April and Scarlett jump on stage. They begin performing for the group.

April
Please put your hands together for Scarlett the gymnast.

Narrator

The group gives a generous applause. Scarlett runs down the stage and performs a triple back flip. Applause follows.

April

She will now perform a quadruple back flip and land on a table. Drumroll please.

Narrator

The group begins pounding on their tables. Scarlett backs up to give herself running space. She sprints to the front of the stage and jumps. She jumps so high that she almost hits a chandelier on the ceiling. She executes a quadruple back flip and sticks the landing perfectly.

S Nice

Way to go Scarlett.

Pascha

Well done.

Narrator

The group cheers as Scarlett stands on the table and bows.

Kevin

I wish I could flip like that.

Scarlett

Hi uncle.

Narrator

Scarlett runs to Kevin and jumps on him.

Kevin

How are you doing Scarlett?

Scarlett
I am doing fine.

Kevin
That is good.

Narrator
Kevin puts Scarlett down.

S Nice
How have you been Kevin?

Kevin
Not bad.

Pascha
Would you like me to beckon the dream fairies?

Kevin
Yes please.

Narrator
Pascha and the dream fairies enter the hall.

Kevin
Okay. It looks like everyone is here. It is very important that you defeat the Saxons. If you do not, they will continue spreading hopelessness throughout the universe.

Champion
We have a plan.

Kevin
I am listening.

Champion

S Nice has been sending secret messages to the prisoners.
We plan to build an army and attack the Saxons.

Kevin
What is your current position?

Champion
We have taken refuge inside of a wrecked space craft.

Kevin
Good. Dream fairies, what are your thoughts?

Fairy
We have been keeping an eye on them. They are safe for now, but they have to relocate by tomorrow.

Kevin
Why is that?

Fairy
The space craft is emitting a radio signal. The Saxons have been tracking it. By tomorrow, the Saxons will discover their location. They must relocate by noon.

Champion
We will gather food, water, and weapons and break the space craft by O five hundred.

Fairy
That will be fine.

April
Fairy, we lost the rings you gave us.

Fairy

You did not lose them. They vanish when they have fulfilled their purpose. Their purpose was fulfilled the moment you landed in the river.

Scarlett

That explains it.

Narrator

Fairy walks them to the elevators.

Fairy

You can remove your cloud shoes. You no longer need them. In you go.

Narrator

Kevin, Akeeba, and Pascha stay. The rest of the group gets into the elevator.

S Nice

Tell mom we are okay. Tell her we will be home soon.

Kevin

I will. Be careful.

Narrator

The elevator door closes, and the elevator dives rapidly. It spins, flips, and twirls. Everyone's feet remain glued to the ground. The elevator comes to a stop, and the door opens.

Champion

There is our space craft straight ahead. Come on.

Narrator

They walk to the space craft. The door is unlocked. Champion opens the door. After everyone enters,

Champion locks the door shut. Each of them sees themselves sleeping.

Scarlett
That is me on the bed.

Cleaner
Maybe we should wake ourselves up.

Champion
Good idea. Everyone find themselves and wake themselves up.

Narrator
They each walk to themselves. They call out to themselves.

Scarlett
Scarlett, wake up.

S Nice
Wake up S Nice.

Champion
On your feet Champion.

Individual
I know you probably have a hangover, but I need you to wake up Individual.

Narrator
They each wake themselves up. They meet in the front of the space ship. They share their dream with one another. They are surprised to learn that everyone had the exact same dream.

Champion

We need to disappear by O five hundred. That means we have twenty minutes to pack what we can and break this ship.

Narrator

They pack, eat, and break the space ship by O five hundred. They run into the forest.

VI. Guns & Roses

Champion

We need to get as far away from the ship as possible. Now that we have weapons, we can take refuge in the caves.

S Nice

I thought we were near the caves.

Champion

We are near the caves, but we have to find new ones. These caves are too close to the space ship. The Saxons will be looking for us here.

Narrator

The group walks for hours. It is foggy and hot. The atmosphere is humid. Flees and mosquitos travel with the group. The sound of weedles can be heard in the distance.

S Nice

I do not feel so good.

Champion

It is probably just the...

Narrator

S Nice begins falling to the ground. Champion catches her.

Scarlett

Mom.

Narrator

Scarlett shouts.

S Nice

I feel tired.

Narrator
Champion rests S Nice on the ground.

Champion
Maybe you just need to rest.

S Nice
I feel like I am under anesthetic.

Champion
What?

S Nice
I feel...

Narrator
S Nice faints.

Champion
Someone get me some water.

Narrator
Wendy checks S Nice's pulse.

Wendy
Her pulse is dangerously low. If we do not fix the problem,
S Nice will die.

Narrator
She hugs her mom. Then she screams.

Scarlett
What is this on her back?

Narrator

Champion turns S Nice over, and there is a fourteen inch spider on her back.

Champion
What in god's name is that?

Narrator
He says as he pulls out his gun.

Scarlett
Do not shoot my mom.

Narrator
She pleads.

Champion
Right.

Narrator
Champion pulls out a knife and strikes the spider. It does not budge. He strikes it again, and it hisses back.

Champion
I have to shoot it.

Narrator
He pulls out his gun.

Champion
Say hello to my little friend you mother f...

Gun
Blast!

Narrator
The spider is shattered.

Champion

S Nice, how do you feel?

S Nice

I feel better.

April

What a relief? I am terrified of spiders.

S Nice

I do not see any spiders.

Champion

Not anymore. I blasted it.

Scarlett

It was on your back mom. It was huge. It covered your entire back.

S Nice

What?

Narrator

She says as she jumps up. She starts hitting her back.

S Nice

Where was it?

Narrator

Champion tries to calm her down.

S Nice

Get it off!

Champion

It is gone. You are okay. I blasted it. I blasted it.

Narrator

S Nice starts calming down.

April

Look. There is a house.

Scarlett

I wonder if anyone lives there.

Champion

Stay here.

Narrator

Champion and Individual walk to the front door.

Champion

You knock on the door. I will stand over here and be ready to shoot.

Narrator

Individual knocks on the door, but no one answers. He knocks a second time, and no one answers.

Individual

No one is answering.

Champion

Try it one more time.

Narrator

Just before he knocks, the door is opened. An old lady answers the door. The old lady is dressed in a tactical uniform.

Old lady
Were you followed?

Individual
No.

Old lady
Get inside before they see you.

Narrator
Old lady pulls Individual inside. Old lady points her gun to his face.

Old lady
Did you come alone?

Individual
Yes.

Old lady
Do not lie to me.

Narrator
She says as she pushes him.

Old lady
Did you come alone?

Individual
No. I did not come alone. My friends are outside.

Narrator
Old lady calms down and becomes friendly.

Old lady

I will make us something to eat. Go get your friends. It is not polite to keep them outside.

Narrator
Individual goes outside.

Champion
Is it safe?

Individual
Yes. I think so. Old lady sent me to get you and the group. She is making us something to eat.

Champion
I will get everyone.

Narrator
He runs to the group.

S Nice
Does anyone live there?

Champion
An old lady lives there, but, apparently, she is really nice. She has invited us inside.

Narrator
They walk into the house and sit on the sofa.

Old lady
Hello everyone.

Everyone
Hello.

Old lady

What brings you to this side of the island?

Champion
We are camping.

Old lady
What is with all the weapons?

Champion
You can never be too careful.

Old lady
Amen to that. Check out my piece.

Narrator
Old lady pulls out a large rifle and slams it on the coffee table.

Old lady
It is a titanium nine hundred millimeter glock. This is my baby.

Champion
That is a big gun.

S Nice
Do you live alone?

Old lady
My husband passed away two years ago. It has been just me and my glock ever since.

Scarlett
Do you ever get lonely?

Old lady

Sometimes I do. I am happy when I get visitors. You can stay for as long as you want. You will be safe here. Are you hungry?

April
I am.

Old lady
You are in luck because I am making stew and strawberry tea.

April
That sounds good.

Old lady
I will go check on it. I wish I had some helpers.

Scarlett
I will help.

April
Me too.

Narrator
April and Scarlett follow Old lady to the kitchen. S Nice goes with them as a precaution. She does not trust Old lady yet.

S Nice
Do you have a name?

Old lady
My name is Lesedi.

Scarlett
It is nice to meet you Lesedi.

Lesedi
What is your name darling?

Scarlett
My name is Scarlett.

Lesedi
It is a pleasure to meet you Scarlett.

April
My name is April.

Lesedi
It is a pleasure to meet you April. Are these your children?

S Nice
Just Scarlett. April is our good friend.

Lesedi
Do you have any more children?

S Nice
Scarlett is going to have a sister soon.

Lesedi
You are pregnant?

S Nice
Yes.

Narrator
Scarlett dashes to the living room.

Scarlett
I am going to have a sister.

Narrator
She screams.

Scarlett
My mom is pregnant.

Narrator
The group congratulates S Nice.

Wendy
Have you decided on a name?

S Nice
I like the name Lily.

Lesedi
How wonderful. Your two daughters will be Scarlett Lily like the flower. Congratulations.

Narrator
All of a sudden, there is a loud whistle.

Champion
It must be weedle.

Narrator
Champion aims his gun and looks through the front window.

Lesedi
It is just the tea pot. The strawberry tea is ready.

Narrator
S Nice, Scarlett, and April follow Lesedi into the kitchen. They emerge with tea and biscuits. The group chats as they

wait for the stew. Lesedi's living room is immaculate. Pottery and artwork are perfectly placed throughout the living room. The front of the house has a lovely rose garden. One can see the roses from the living room.

VII. Who I Am

Champion

What are your names?

Individual

My name is Mike.

Individual 2

My name is Mike as well.

Champion

It is going to be confusing calling both of you Mike.

Mike

What should we do?

Champion

Do you have a middle name?

Mike

No.

Mike 2

I do not have one either.

Champion

What is your last name?

Mike

Michael.

Champion

Your first name is Mike, and your last name is Michael?

Mike

That is what my birth certificate says.

Mike 2

My last name is Mitchell. That is different than Michael.

Champion

It is still confusing. Mitchell and Michael are too similar.
Do you have a nickname?

Mike

Yes.

Champion

What is it?

Mike

Mitch.

Champion

You have to be kidding me. Your first name is Mike.
Your last name is Michael. Where did you get the
nickname Mitch?

Mike

People call me Mitch because they say Mitchell sounds like
Michael.

Champion

Why do they not just call you Mike or Michael?

Mike

That is because Mike and Michael are my real names.
Mitch is my nickname. My nickname cannot be the same
as my real name.

Champion

From now on, your name is Melissa.

Mike

Melissa is a girl's name.

Champion

Then you pick a name. I am getting tired of all this confusion.

Narrator

Mike thinks for a couple of seconds.

Mike

I got it.

Champion

Let us hear it.

Mike

You can call me Luke.

April

My friend's name is Luke. That is going to be confusing to me.

Champion

Pick a different name.

Mike

Call me Mario.

Champion

I am confused by all the Ms at this point. Pick a name that does not begin with the letter M.

Narrator

Mike thinks for a couple more seconds.

Mike
Call me Kelvin.

S Nice
Kelvin sounds like my brother's name, Kevin.

Champion
Pick a different name.

Mike
I am running out of names.

Narrator
Mike yells in frustration.

Mike
My name is Mike. Deal with it! How would you like if I called you by a different name? Champion, your name is Bruce now. S Nice, your name is April. April, your new name is Sophia. Scarlett, your name is Joselyn. Lesedi's name is Stacy. Wendy's new name is Tutankhamun. Prisoner 2's name is Latasha.

Latasha
My real name is Latasha.

Narrator
Mike calms down.

Mike
Really?

Latasha
Yeah.

Mike
What a coincidence.

Narrator
Mike gets fired up again.

Mike
Latasha will no longer be called Latasha. Latasha will be called Dorian. Lastly, Prisoner 3 will be called Holiday.

Bruce
We get the point.

Mike
Good! Then you can all have your names back.

Champion
Thanks.

Mike
You are welcome.

April
We still do not know Prisoner 3's name.

Prisoner 3
My name is Mercedes.

Mike 2
Is that your real name or your stripper name?

Mercedes
It is both.

Champion

I knew it.

Mike

You are a stripper?

Mercedes

Yes I am. I am saving money for college.

S Nice

Have you ever heard of financial aid?

Narrator

S Nice says in disapproval.

Mercedes

Do not judge me. I see young women grinding on guys in night clubs. They wear next to nothing. They grind for free. I grind for cash. Do not hate me because I am beautiful.

Scarlett

Mom, what is stripping?

S Nice

Stripping is something that women do to degrade themselves honey. Stripping is for women who have no respect for themselves.

Narrator

S Nice is becoming angry. She is now shouting.

S Nice

Stripping is for women who would rather be objectified by men rather than compete with them intellectually. Stripping is for trash!

Mercedes

Are you calling me trash?

S Nice

Are you hard of hearing? I explicitly used the word trash, you piece of trash.

Mercedes

You have no right to judge me! Have you ever been raped? I have. Did your mother make you work for pimps when you were only eleven years old? My mother did. Did your father molest you and beat you every day? My father did. I am a product of fucked up circumstances! My circumstances were fucked up, so I became fucked up. I am just now trying to get my life together. I do not need people like you judging me.

Narrator

Mercedes' anger soon turns to sadness. She begins to cry.

S Nice

I apologize. I did not know.

Mercedes

Well, now you know.

Narrator

Mercedes runs to the restroom and locks the door.

S Nice

I did not know.

Narrator

S Nice says remorsefully.

Lesedi

I will go talk to her. S Nice, can you keep an eye on the stew for me?

S Nice
Okay.

Lesedi
Mercedes, may I come in? It is Lesedi.

Narrator
Mercedes is sobbing. She does not respond.

Lesedi
May I come in Mercedes?

Narrator
Mercedes does not respond, but she unlocks the door. Lesedi walks inside and hugs Mercedes. Mercedes cries even harder. Lesedi comforts her.

Lesedi
It is okay. Let it out.

Narrator
Mercedes is crying so loud that the group can hear her. Her sobbing begins to impale their hearts.

S Nice
I did not know it was that bad.

Narrator
S Nice's voice is shaky. Tears begin filling her eyes. S Nice, Wendy, Scarlett and April begin to cry. Mercedes' pain radiates through the restroom. It thickens the atmosphere and weighs down on everyone's heart. Latasha's eyes begin to fill with tears.

Latasha
Life is not fair.

Narrator
She says as tears begin to flow from her eyes.

April
This is why I do not believe in God Scarlett. What kind of God would allow such evil? If he is all powerful, that means he could have prevented Mercedes from being abused. I do not believe in God, but I believe in karma. All the people who abused her will pay.

Narrator
Champion, Mike, Mike 2, and Cleaner are trying not to cry. They can feel her pain. She is crying from her soul. Champion tries to clear his throat.

Champion
I am going to check on the stew.

Narrator
He gets up and power walks to the kitchen. Several tears fall the moment he enters the kitchen. Just as he wipes them away, Mike, Mike 2, and Cleaner enter the kitchen and do the same thing.

Mike 2
We could not let the girls see us crying.

Mike
They look to us for protection.

Cleaner
We are men. We are not supposed to cry.

Champion

We will hang out in here until things settle down.

Lesedi

Look at me.

Narrator

Mercedes looks up, but continues to cry.

Lesedi

I was only ten years old when my step father began molesting me. I was so young and innocent. I did not even know what sex was. He used to say it was a game. I did not know he was molesting me. When I got older, he changed his methods. He stopped asking me if I wanted to play a game. He started asking me if I wanted to make some money. He would sit the money on his lap. If I had sex with him, he would give me the money. If I refused to have sex with him, he would rape me and not give me the money. I tried to tell my mother, but she would not listen. She blamed me for their broken relationship. "I hope he kills you," she would say. I ran away at the age of fifteen. I lived on the streets. I did whatever I had to do to earn money. I began stripping in a sleazy strip club. I hated the environment, but I felt like I belonged there. I felt like I was trash. One day, I met an old woman on the bus. She saw my stripper clothes hanging out of my bag. I thought she was going to insult me. I thought she would call me names like everyone else had done. Instead, she gave me a hug. She squeezed me tight as if I were her long lost child. She looked me straight in the eyes and said, "You are not trash." I broke down and started crying so hard that they stopped the bus. The old woman held me tight just like I am holding you. She kept repeating herself. "You are not trash." "You are not trash." She held me tight. She looked

into my soul and said it one more time. “You are not trash.” I have not set foot in a strip club ever since.

Narrator

Lesedi looks into Mercedes’ soul.

Lesedi

You are not trash.

Narrator

Mercedes squeezes Lesedi once more.

Mercedes

Thank you.

Lesedi

Are you ready for some stew?

Mercedes

I am starving.

Narrator

They exit the restroom. Mercedes walks to S Nice. She gives S Nice a tight hug.

Mercedes

I am not trash.

Narrator

S Nice squeezes her back. The other girls join in a group hug. After a minute, they realize the men are missing.

Lesedi

Where did all the men go?

April

I saw Champion go to the kitchen.

Narrator

The group follows Lesedi to the kitchen. They catch the men off guard. They wipe their tears with haste and try to act macho.

Lesedi

Have you four been crying?

Champion

What? That is nonsense.

Mark

We are men. We do not cry.

Cleaner

Crying is for wimps.

Mark 2

Yeah. We do not cry. We are too strong to cry.

Lesedi

If that is true, then where are my tissues?

Champion

What tissues?

Lesedi

There was a box of tissues on the counter. Now it is gone. Where did it go?

Champion

This is not our house. How would we know where the tissues are?

Narrator

Lesedi sees tissue hanging out of Champion's pocket. She plays dumb.

Lesedi

I must have moved the box upstairs. Anyway, are you guys ready to eat?

S Nice

I will help get the bowls.

Lesedi

That would be great. They are in the cupboard above the stove.

Narrator

S Nice reaches above the cupboard to get some bowls.

S Nice

Your bowls are exceptional.

Lesedi

I make them myself.

S Nice

You should sell these. People would love them.

Lesedi

I just enjoy doing it for fun.

Narrator

They all sit down and eat. After they are finished, Lesedi shows them around the house.

Lesedi

There are three rooms and two restrooms. The men can share a room, and the women can share a room. Make yourselves comfortable.

Narrator

Champion catches up to Lesedi.

Champion

Lesedi.

Lesedi

Yes.

Champion

Are you aware that Saxons have taken over Stanton Island?

Lesedi

Yes I am.

Champion

You are not afraid?

Lesedi

No. What would they want with a little old lady? If they want to get rowdy, let them get rowdy. I am here every day of the week, and I will not hesitate to pop a cap in their ass. Westside!

Narrator

Champion is stunned. He says nothing and just stares.

Lesedi

What?

Champion

Nothing.

Lesedi

I am going outside to clip my roses. If you see any Saxons, let me know. I keep the steel on me at all times.

Narrator

Champion meets the group in the house. S Nice and Cleaner are freestyling.

Cleaner

Chicas, call me tomorrow.

S Nice

Freeze. I go.

Cleaner

Breathe and let go.

S Nice

Seize. I flow.

Champion

I am going to check the perimeter and install a few surveillance cameras. Mike, Mike 2, and...

Narrator

Champion realizes that he forgot to learn Cleaner's name.

Champion

What is your name son?

Cleaner

My name is Santiago.

Champion

Santiago, come with us.

Narrator

All the men go outside with Champion.

Scarlett

I did not know Santiago could rap.

S Nice

He is pretty good.

April

You are pretty good too S Nice.

S Nice

Thank you April.

April

May Scarlett and I help Lesedi with her roses?

S Nice

Yes you may, but stay close to Lesedi. No wondering around.

April

Okay.

Narrator

Scarlett and April go help Lesedi with her garden.

Wendy

Does anyone know how to braid hair?

Latasha

I can braid.

Wendy

Could you braid my hair for me?

Latasha

No problem.

Mercedes

What are you doing S Nice?

S Nice

It is called oasa.

Mercedes

I have never heard of it.

S Nice

Oasa is great for building strength and flexibility.

Mercedes

Can you teach me?

S Nice

Sure.

ARCHIVE FOUR – Rise & Fall

I. Playing it Safe

Champion

We are all set. We have video surveillance on every side of the property.

Lesedi

I am going to call it a night. Let me know if you hear any trouble.

Everyone

Goodnight Lesedi.

Narrator

Champion and Santiago chat.

Santiago

Will it always be this bad?

Champion

It gets a little better, but it still dominates your thoughts.

Santiago

It is all I think about.

Champion

How old are you Santiago?

Santiago

I am thirteen.

Champion

Thirteen is the worst age. Your hormones are raging.

Santiago

What should I do?

Champion

You need a girlfriend.

Santiago

I wish I could turn it off sometimes. Then I would be able to focus.

Champion

There is only one way to turn it off.

Santiago

Which way is that?

Champion

Manually.

Santiago

Do you mean masturbate?

Champion

Either you need to do it or someone needs to do it for you. One way or the other, it needs to get done. That is the only way you will be able to focus at your age.

Santiago

I think I understand.

Champion

If you are going to have sex, make sure you use protection.

Santiago

I know.

Narrator

April and Scarlett recall an earlier poem.

April

We should ask your mom what it means.

Scarlett

Stop freaking out.

April

I am not freaking out. I am just playing it safe. That poem was clearly warning us about something. It worried me so much that I decided to memorize it just in case.

Scarlett

Okay.

Narrator

They meet S Nice in the living room.

April

S Nice, can you help us?

S Nice

What am I helping you with?

April

It is a poem. We think it is trying to warn us about something.

S Nice

Let me see the poem.

April

I do not have it.

S Nice

How am I supposed to help you?

Scarlett

She memorized it mom.

S Nice

Okay. Let me hear it.

April

“In the day, they sleep. In the evening, they eat. In the night, they creep. Be wise. Do not be hypnotized. Do not stay. Flee and run away. As high as the sky, they jump but do not fly. Like acrobats, they flip. In the forest, they rip.”

S Nice

That is definitely a warning. Scarlett, can you get Champion.

Narrator

She gets him.

Champion

Scarlett says you need some help.

S Nice

April, can you recite the poem again?

Narrator

April recites the poem for Champion. Champion ponders its meaning.

Champion

Do you think it is referring to weedles?

S Nice

I do not think so. Weedles do not jump very high. If they did, they would have jumped on top of the space ship when I was on it.

Champion

I might have to sleep on this one. I do not know of any creature like the one the poem is describing.

S Nice

“Be wise. Do not be hypnotized.”

Champion

Maybe the creature is stunning.

S Nice

That is possible. April, I want you to write the poem down for me. I will look it over.

April

Okay.

Narrator

April uses a black pen to write the poem in S Nice’s notepad. Scarlett and April follow S Nice to the women’s bedroom. Champion goes to the men’s bedroom and lies down. It is a quiet night. Crickets serenade the night. The fog is thick. The outside temperature is cool. Lesedi and the group are all sound asleep.

II. Hostage Crisis

Sergeant
Champion, they have two hostages.

Champion
I am going down there.

S 2
You will be killed.

Champion
I have no choice.

S 3
We will be in your ear on channel 4.

Narrator
Champion suits up. He is in full armor. He exits the van and approaches the bank.

Fugitive
Do not come any closer, or I will blow her head off.

Champion
I am here to help.

Fugitive
I mean it. Do not take another step.

S 4
Champion, we have a shot at Fugitive.

Champion
Margin of error?

S 4

Nine percent.

Champion

It is too risky. Tell the sniper to stand down.

S 4

Yes sir.

Fugitive

Who are you talking to? Do not come any closer.

Narrator

Champion stops walking and begins eliminating his armor.

S 4

Champion, what are you doing?

Champion

Trust me.

Fugitive

One more step and this bitch is dead.

Narrator

Champion slowly places his gun on the ground and puts his hands in the air.

Champion

I am unarmed. We can both get out of this alive. What are your demands?

Fugitive

My list of demands is long.

Champion

I have time. What are your demands?

Fugitive

I demand that every citizen's credit be wiped clean. I want a fresh start for every citizen of Lotus.

Champion

I do not know if I can promise that.

Fugitive

I do not know if I can promise not to shoot this bitch.

Narrator

The hostage screams.

Champion

I will see what I can do. What else are you demanding?

Fugitive 2

I demand to be paid a living wage. I demand that the government garnish the wages of the rich and give it to the poor.

Champion

I will see what I can do. Do you have any more demands?

Fugitive

We will tell you our other demands later. Meet these two demands. If you fail to meet them, we will kill both hostages. You have one hour.

Narrator

Fugitive and Fugitive 2 pull the hostages back inside the bank and lock the door. The other officers meet up with Champion.

Champion

Get the president on the phone.

S 5

Yes sir.

Narrator

The president gets on the phone.

President

Champion, what is it?

Champion

I need you to do the impossible.

President

I like doing the impossible. What do you need?

Champion

I need you to freeze the top one percent's bank accounts.

President

Done.

Narrator

The President enters a code into a top secret financial database. The top one percent's bank accounts become frozen immediately. This causes some embarrassment.

P Money

Yeah. I get money all day. Money and bitches is what I am about. I wear nothing but Buccie. I am so fly.

P Money's Agent

These weak ass rappers cannot see you. You are the shit.

P Money

You got that right. I am the shit. I eat shit for breakfast. It tastes normal to me because I am the shit. You feel me?

P Money

I feel you.

Manager

Excuse me P Money.

P Money

What up?

Manager

I am sorry to tell you, but your credit has been declined.

P Money

It must be a mistake.

Manager

We are going to have to ask you to leave.

P Money

But I am P Money.

Narrator

P Money pleads.

Manager

Sorry P Money, but you have no money. You have to go.

Narrator

The security throws P Money out of the restaurant.

Steel

Many people say that I am the best commercial developer to ever exist in life, but I would never say that about myself.

Assistant

Mr. Steel, would you like gold or platinum kitchen sinks.

Steel

I want both.

Narrator

The police are outside. Assistant answers the door.

Assistant

Can I help you officers?

Police

We are here to oversee the repossession.

Narrator

Twenty movers storm inside Mr. Steel's house. They start taking everything.

Mr. Steel

What is the meaning of all this?

Police

Your property is being repossessed. Your bank account has been frozen, and you owe a lot of people a lot of money. We will continue taking your property until you pay what you owe.

Narrator

They wipe Mr. Steel's house clean. His dog is all he has left.

Police

I will take that.

Narrator

The police officer snatches the dog out of Mr. Steel's hands.

Mr. Steel

That dog is all I have left.

Police

"That dog is all I have left."

Narrator

The police officer mocks Mr. Steel. Everyone starts laughing and slapping him in the face as they depart.

Police

Please be advised, I am taking your girlfriend.

Narrator

Mr. Steel's girlfriend comes downstairs and follows the officer.

Girlfriend

Sorry honey, but you are broke. You cannot afford my pussy cat anymore. Goodbye.

Dolores

Oh my god. Like, the shoes are so cute.

Friend

You should totally buy them. Like, they are only like fifty thousand dollars.

Dolores

Like, I do not know. Like, do like you like think like they like will like match like my like outfit?

Friend

Like, totally.

Dolores

Like, that cashier is like totally checking me out.

Friend

He is cute.

Dolores

I am going to get the shoes.

Narrator

There is a long line. People see Dolores and come inside the store. They see she is about to purchase shoes that cost fifty thousand dollars. Dolores pulls out her credit card and hands it to the store clerk. Dolores signs a couple of autographs while she waits.

Dolores

I am going to like rock these people's world.

Friend

Maybe you could rock their world by taking the fifty thousand dollars and buying them shoes. With fifty thousand dollars, you could afford to purchase nice shoes for every woman in this store. You could easily purchase five hundred shoes, of top quality, and give them to your fans. That would be cool.

Dolores

What is wrong with you? You are like a total downer.

Store Clerk

I am sorry Dolores, but your credit card has been declined.

Dolores

That is impossible. My credit card has no limit.

Store Clerk

I need you to move so I can help the other customers.

President

What else do you need?

Champion

I need you to garnish the wages of the rich and give it to the poor.

President

Done.

Narrator

The President logs back into the top secret financial database. He transfers the wealth of the rich and gives it to the poor. This causes an instant boom in the economy.

Store Clerk

How is your day going?

Mom

It is going okay.

Store Clerk

Will this be all for you?

Narrator

Mom is trying her best to provide for her kids by herself. She hopes that the food will last until the end of the week. She has four mouths to feed.

Mom

Yes. That will be all.

Narrator

She purchases the groceries and begins walking out the store. She decides to check her account balance at the store ATM. "I hope I have at least a few dollars left" she says. She inserts her card and enters her password. She selects the check balance option. It prints out a receipt. She cannot bear to look at it. She walks to her space pod and unloads the groceries. Once everyone has their seatbelt on, she finally glances at her balance. She cannot believe it. Her balance is one billion dollars (approx. valued at 2010 AD). She immediately starts screaming.

Mom

Thank you Jesus!

Child

What is it mom?

Mom

We are rich. We are going back inside the store.

Narrator

They walk back in. Mom calls for the manager.

Manager

How can I help you?

Mom

I want to buy everything in the store.

Narrator
Manager laughs.

Manager
You are funny.

Narrator
Mom shows Manager her account balance.

Manager
Close the store. We are sold out.

Narrator
The manager shouts.

Mom
I want to donate half the store to those in need.

Manager
You got it. Would you like paper or plastic?

President
Do you have any further demands?

Champion
I think your last action will nullify the need to extinguish the credit. A fifty thousand dollar debt is nothing to a person with one billion dollars.

President
Okay. If you need anything else, let me know. Good luck.

Narrator
Champion hangs up the phone.

Champion

Where are the hostages? Where are the fugitives?

S 4

They all left. Everyone is safe. Once the money hit the accounts, the fugitives released the hostages. In fact, I think one of the fugitives and hostages went to get married. You did it Champion. You saved them.

S 5

Let us hear it for Champion.

Everyone

Champion. Champion. Champion.

III. Worst Nightmare

Scarlett

Champion. Champion. Champion.

Narrator

Champion wakes up in battle mode.

Champion

All hands on deck. Steady the bow. What is the status of our shields? I want to be debriefed in ten minutes. Where is commander Troy? Why are you not in uniform soldier?

Scarlett

I am not a soldier. I am a little girl.

Narrator

Champion snaps out of it.

Champion

Oh. What it is?

Scarlett

I hear something outside.

Champion

Are you sure?

Scarlett

It does not sound like people playing with a rocket. It sounds like weedles.

Narrator

They walk to the surveillance room.

Champion

You were right. There is a group of weedles on the north side of the property. We will be safe inside. I want to monitor their behavior.

Scarlett

Can I watch?

Champion

I do not see why not.

Narrator

Scarlett and Champion closely observe the weedles.

Champion

Why are they backing away?

Narrator

A creature stands alone in front of four weedles. The creature does not appear to have any weapons. The weedles appear to be afraid of it. They are whistling very loudly. Their whistling begins to wake everyone up.

S Nice

What is going on?

Champion

I do not know exactly. It looks like the weedles are afraid of whatever that thing is.

Narrator

Within one minute, everyone is inside the surveillance room with Champion.

Lesedi

Oh no.

Champion
What?

Lesedi
That is a tree hopper.

Scarlett
What is a tree hopper?

Lesedi
They are not from this planet. They arrived just a few years ago. They only come out at night. They are the fastest and strongest creatures that I have ever seen. They are eight feet tall. They have transparent skin. They can change shape and color in an instant. They have four mouths. Each mouth sits inside the other. Each mouth has hundreds of jagged teeth. They have two arms and two legs. Their heads are covered with long, humanlike, hair. They like to hypnotize their prey before they attack. They do not have wings, but it seems like they do because they are able to jump hundreds of feet into the air.

S Nice
That explains the poem.

Lesedi
Tree hoppers eat anything and everything. They even eat each other. They can smell fear.

Champion
How do we defeat them?

Lesedi
I have a bomb shelter under the living room. Whenever they come around, I lock myself inside the bomb shelter until morning. They are gone by morning.

April

The poem said to flee and run away.

Champion

I did not write that poem. If you run away from your fears, you will be running away your whole life. It is better to face your fears head on.

S Nice

What is your plan?

Champion

We need to...

Narrator

Something slams into the door.

Lesedi

It is a tree hopper. Everyone get inside the bomb shelter!

Narrator

Lesedi pushes aside the sofa. She opens the secret latch to the bomb shelter. They all climb inside.

Champion

I am staying up here. My trigger finger is itching.

Lesedi

I am staying with you.

Narrator

Lesedi grabs her rifle.

Lesedi

I am tired of being terrorized by tree hoppers. This ends tonight.

S Nice
Champion, I have an idea.

Champion
What is it?

S Nice
I think my gold pen caused the weedles to turn into gold statues. I want to write all over the property, but I cannot do it until tomorrow. We can hide down here for tonight. Tomorrow, they will not know what hit them.

Champion
I back down from no one.

S Nice
Do not consider this plan as backing down. Consider this plan as setting up. The tree hoppers know we are here. They will surely be back. When they do, they will die by the edge of this gold pen.

Champion
Okay. We annihilate them tomorrow.

Narrator
Champion helps Lesedi down the bomb shelter.

Champion
Give me one second. I want to give them something to remember us.

Narrator

Champion opens the front window and throws several bombs outside. They travel one hundred feet away. They land near several tree hoppers. Several other tree hoppers are within ten feet of the window when he throws the bombs out. They start climbing through the window.

S Nice
Hurry Champion.

Narrator
Champion dives into the bomb shelter.

Champion
Close the door!

Narrator
S Nice slams and locks the bomb shelter door.

Champion
Get on the ground.

Narrator
Everyone lunges on the floor as Champion pushes the detonator. There is a loud explosion. The explosion kills seven tree hoppers.

Champion
I guarantee they will be back now. We are safe in here. You can all go back to sleep. I am going to stay up and watch the door.

Narrator
Champion cocks his rifle. Lesedi cocks her rifle as well.

Lesedi
We are going to watch the door.

Narrator

Lesedi and Champion watch the door as the group sleeps.
An hour expires.

Champion

It is inefficient for us to watch the door at the same time. I will watch it for two hours. Then you will watch it for two hours.

Lesedi

Yes sir. Permission to sleep sir.

Champion

Permission granted soldier.

Narrator

Lesedi and Champion alternate watching the door. The morning comes. To be safe, Champion decides to wait until the afternoon to open the shelter.

IV. Written in Gold

Lesedi

It is noon. Are you ready?

Champion

Mike, I want you to open the shelter slowly and quietly. Crack it open about two inches. I am going to scan the room before I exit. Lesedi, I want you right behind me. Be ready to light this place up if they get inside the shelter.

Narrator

Mike walks to the front and slowly cracks the shelter open. Champion scans the living room.

Champion

It looks clear. I am going out. I want you to watch my back.

Narrator

Champion jumps out with his rifle. He scans the front of the house.

Champion

The front is clear. Over.

Lesedi

10-4. Over.

Narrator

He slowly walks to the rear of the house. He is looking for any sign of movement or activity.

Champion

The rear is clear. I am going to check the bedrooms. Over.

Lesedi

10-4. Over.

Narrator

He checks all the bedrooms.

Champion

All the bedrooms are clear. Over.

Lesedi

10-4. Over.

Narrator

Champion opens the back door. He begins scanning outside. He makes his way to the front of the house.

Champion

The perimeter is clear. I am going to check the roof. Over.

Lesedi

10-4. Over.

Narrator

Champion throws a bomb on the roof. If he spots a tree hopper, he will immediately detonate the bomb. He climbs on the roof.

Champion

The roof is clear. I am coming back inside. Over.

Lesedi

10-4. Over.

Narrator

From the roof, Champion is able to see the weedles' remains. Their body parts remain scattered across the field.

Champion jumps off the roof and goes inside. He does one more sweep of the house. It is all clear.

Champion

It is safe to come out.

Narrator

The group all begin climbing out of the bomb shelter.

Champion

I do not want anyone sitting near the windows or walls. Do you understand?

Everyone

Yes.

Champion

We need to maintain round the clock surveillance of the premises. Scarlett, April, and Santiago, I want you in the surveillance room. Let me know if you see anything unusual.

S/A/S

Yes sir.

Narrator

Champion hands Wendy a shotgun.

Wendy

I do not know how to shoot.

Champion

That is why I gave you a shotgun. If we get an intruder, just pull the trigger. It is not rocket science. I want you and Lesedi in the kitchen covering the back door.

W/L

Yes sir.

Champion

Mike and Mike 2, I want you to get a rifle and cover the roof. Take radios with you. I want updates every hour.

M/M 2

Yes sir.

Champion

I want Mercedes, S Nice, and Latasha to come with me.

Narrator

They go outside. He hands Mercedes a rope. He hands Latasha lighter fluid.

Champion

I want you to set four perimeters around the house: twenty five feet; fifty feet; one hundred feet; and one hundred fifty feet. As Mercedes lays the rope, I want you, Latasha, to drench it in lighter fluid. Be careful not to get the lighter fluid on your clothes or skin. Mike and Mike 2 will provide cover for you from the roof. Mike and Mike 2, do you copy?

Mike

We copy.

Champion

I need you to provide cover for Mercedes and Latasha as they set the perimeters. As you watch them, keep your eyes and ears open for treehoppers. Over.

Mike

10-4. Over.

Champion

S Nice, I want you to write and draw all over the house. I will provide cover for you.

Narrator

S Nice begins writing and drawing on the front door. She draws on the entire house, including the roof. The gold ink begins to glow. The ink begins connecting itself. After it has connected, the house appears to be solid gold.

S Nice

Maybe I should use my pen for the weapons and ammunition.

Champion

That is a good idea.

Narrator

S Nice writes on the weapons and ammunition just like she did on the house. She does the same thing to the lid of the bomb shelter. Then she writes on the interior of the entire house. The entire house, inside and out, is now covered in gold ink.

Mercedes

We are finished setting the perimeters. What would you like us to do now?

Champion

Go inside and clean up. After you clean up, go to the surveillance room.

M/L

Yes sir.

Champion
Mike and Mike 2, do you copy?

Mike 2
We copy.

Champion
How are things looking up there? Over.

Mike
Everything looks good so far. Over.

Champion
Good. I am going inside. I will be back in a minute. Over.

M/M 2
10-4. Over.

Narrator
Champion walks to the surveillance room.

Champion
Mercedes and Latasha, come with me.

Narrator
They go to the kitchen.

Champion
We are almost ready for the night. I plan on attracting every tree hopper on Stanton Island. We will be in the bomb shelter for several days. I want you four to take all the food to the bomb shelter. Lesedi, I want you to cover the back door.

W/M/L/S/L
Yes sir.

Narrator

Champion walks to the surveillance room.

Champion

Santiago, I want you to help the girls take food to the bomb shelter. Get all the water too.

Santiago

Yes sir.

Champion

Mike and Mike 2, do you copy?

Mike

We copy.

Champion

I am coming on the roof. Over.

M/M 2

10-4. Over.

Narrator

Champion climbs on the roof.

Champion

I have the group loading the bomb shelter with food and water. By 16:00, we are locking ourselves in the bomb shelter. I want you to be extra vigilant over the next hour. Keep me posted.

M/M 2

Yes sir.

Narrator

Champion goes back into the house.

Champion

What is the status of the transfer?

S Nice

The transfer is about seventy percent complete.

Champion

I want you guys to speed it up.

S Nice

Yes sir.

Champion

How is our surveillance looking?

Scarlett

Everything is tip top.

April

It is quiet as a mouse.

Champion

Good. Keep me posted.

Narrator

Champion goes to set the perimeter timers. Each perimeter is set to combust at 20:00 since that is when it becomes completely dark. The perimeters serve as a method to attract attention from the tree hoppers.

S Nice

The transfer is complete.

Champion

Great work. We are going to be in close proximity to each other for the next several days. I want you all to take five minute steamers. After you finish, go into the bomb shelter.

Narrator

Each group member takes a five minute steamer. Champion covers the roof while Mike and Mike 2 take a steamer.

Mike

Champion, do you copy?

Champion

I copy.

Mike

Everyone has taken a steamer. Over.

Champion

10-4. I am coming inside. Over.

Mike

10-4. Over.

Narrator

Champion goes inside. He closes and locks all the windows and doors to the house, making it more difficult for the tree hoppers to enter. He takes a steamer and meets the group in the bomb shelter. He closes and locks the bomb shelter.

Champion

We will take refuge down here for the next five days. We have enough food and water to last at least two months if need be. After five days, I will perform a sweep of the

premises just as I did today. I have installed video surveillance, in the bomb shelter, so we can observe and monitor the premises. We will alternate watching the door. There will be four shifts. Each shift will be six hours. I will take first shift. Lesedi will take second shift. Mike will take third shift. Mike 2 will take fourth shift. Anyone attempting to break the bomb shelter or open the door will be shot and killed. Does anyone have any questions?

Narrator

No one says a word.

Champion

At ease soldiers.

V. Stupid Genius

Narrator

Echelon has called a meeting with two hundred Echelons. They are attempting to decipher S Nice's poem.

Fall

Saxophones become rusty during fall. The windpipes become rusty most of all. In the fall, the leaves change color, but the leaves are not alone. These changes come together and affect the saxophone. Saxophones come in several shapes and sizes, but the fall will affect them all. Saxophones become rusty during fall. S Nice.

Echelon

We cannot even begin to understand this poem until we get a saxophone and analyze it.

Echelon 2

I agree.

Narrator

Within five minutes, a guard brings them a saxophone.

Echelon

Let me see it.

Narrator

The guard hands the saxophone to Echelon. The Echelons pass it around the large conference table.

Echelon

What can we discern from this saxophone?

Echelon 4

It is heavy.

Echelon 5

It has over twenty buttons.

Echelon

Why are you not writing this down?

Narrator

Echelon shouts to a Strata guard.

Strata

My mistake.

Echelon 6

The saxophone is in the windpipe family. Therefore, our answer will reside the windpipes.

Echelon 7

It is vital that we observe the saxophone not from the perspective of a Saxon but from the perspective and vantage of an ordinary individual who lacks our intellect. We need to embody, embrace, emulate, and eviscerate ourselves with ignorance in order to understand the ignorant poem written by this S Nice.

Echelon 8

The analysis lends itself to validity by maintaining a constant value of $E = MC^2$.

Echelon 9

To understand the saxophone, we need to first understand the gravitational forces which constantly weigh down on a musician's vocal cords and inhalation system.

Echelon 10

I find it intriguing and odd that S Nice would use the word saxophone rather than saxophoneous. Saxophone is derivative of saxophoneous. Saxophoneous is the more proper, understandable, comprehensive, academic, acceptable, scholarly, and controntoometeretereniomereesic term. If you ask me, this S Nice is without class and without mental capacity. Even more disturbing to me, is that my fellow Echelons are guilty of using the word saxophone rather than saxophoneous.

Echelon 11

The next step in our analysis should be to understand, fully, the nature and subatomic properties of rust. Rust, you see, conjugates among nonliving things. On the other hand, the saxophoneous is arguably a living thing because fall is a season and the saxophoneous is aware of fall. This S Nice is, I think, trying to reconcile the distinction of life and death of the saxophoneous.

Echelon 12

I do not believe it is possible to understand the saxophoneous without understanding, completely, wind. Wind is essential to the windpipe. The pipe will not work without wind. It is therefore, necessary, therefore, once more and forevermore, to redefine, again, what we mean by wind, and when will the wind win the battle in the end. This is the only question that we should be asking.

Echelon

I believe pondering upon the expressive and creative elements of the saxophoneous is absolutely and undoubtedly the only way to understand the saxophoneous and its innate properties of music and copper metal.

Echelon 14

I cannot believe my fellow Echelons have overlooked one uncompromising truth that is the mastering of an instrument. We must all, today, enroll in saxophoneous exercises and music lessons.

Echelon

I concur. We will reconvene once we have had ten music lessons. Ten lessons should be more than enough for an Echelon to master such a simplistic instrument. Once we master it, we will unravel the meaning of S Nice's poem. We are adjourned.

VI. Plan B

Scarlett

I will be right back. I left Battleboard upstairs.

Narrator

Battleboard is game similar to chess.

Champion

Hurry back.

Scarlett

I will.

Narrator

Scarlett exits the bomb shelter. She walks to the kitchen to locate the game. The game is not where she left it. “That is weird,” she thinks. She can see the game lying on the floor outside. She opens the back door and goes outside. It has become dark. The fog is beginning to roll in. She walks outside. She picks up the game and turns around. To her surprise, the door is closed. “The wind must have closed it.” She tries to open the door, but it is locked. She walks around to the front door. The front door is locked. All the windows are closed and locked as well. She walks back to the back door. She tries to open it a second time, but it is still locked. She starts to panic. The sound of weedles can be heard in the distance. She worries that tree hoppers may be near. Suddenly, she feels someone’s cold breath breathing on the back of her neck. She freezes. She is too afraid to turn around. She closes her eyes. “I hope this is just a dream.” Then she feels a long cold tongue lick the back of her neck. She trembles but does not scream. She is in shock. She is too afraid to scream. The creature leans its head near her ear and growls gruesomely. Finally,

she turns around. “Did I imagine it?” She thinks. There is no one there. She begins to calm down.

Scarlett

I need to find a way...

Narrator

Scarlett is snatched and carried three hundred feet in the air. She flips uncontrollably. She lands deep inside the forest. When she lands, she turns to find the creature that snatched her. She finds no one. She remains alone deep in the forest. She walks through the forest and tries to find her way back to the house. It is difficult to see. A forest noise startles her.

Scarlett

Who is there?

Narrator

She looks around frantically.

Scarlett

Leave me alone.

Narrator

She is not sure where to go. She does not move. It seems like every direction leads her deeper into the forest. A weedle emerges from the bushes. It begins to whistle. Scarlett backs away.

Scarlett

Leave me alone. I am just a kid. Do not eat me.

Narrator

The weedle continues slowly creeping toward Scarlett. It begins whistling louder. As it whistles, Scarlett can see each head's razor sharp teeth.

Scarlett

Leave me alone. Please leave me alone.

Narrator

The weedle is now only three feet away from Scarlett. Scarlett closes her eyes and covers her face. The weedle lunges at her.

Scarlett

No!

Narrator

A tree hopper lands in between Scarlett and the weedle. The impact from the tree hopper's landing seems as if the tree hopper had fallen out of the sky. Dust covers the air. Scarlett falls on the ground. The whistling has stopped. It has turned into a scream. Scarlett looks through the dust and sees the tree hopper carrying the weedle. The tree hopper is eating the weedle's face. She can hear the sounds of bones being crushed. The weedle is being eaten alive. The tree hopper turns to Scarlett and smiles. Scarlett screams and starts running. The tree hopper jumps two hundred feet into the air and lands in front of Scarlett. The tree hopper starts glowing. Its skin looks like a strobe light. Colorful lights pulsate through its clear skin. It begins moving side to side while continuing to glow. "Be wise. Do not be hypnotized. Do not stay. Flee and run away." Scarlett remembers. She begins sprinting in the opposite direction.

Scarlett

Help me.

Narrator
She screams.

Scarlett
Someone please help me.

Narrator
Four tree hoppers land in front of her. They all begin glowing. Scarlett is surrounded by tree hoppers. They glow and circle around her. They are twenty feet away.

Scarlett
Please help me. Somebody!

Narrator
They are now fifteen feet away. They begin closing in on her. Scarlett has no way out. She has nowhere to run. She hears a dream fairy's voice.

Fairy
Show the tree hoppers that they are not the only acrobats in the forest.

Narrator
The tree hoppers are ten feet away. Scarlett stands straight up. She sprints as fast as she can. She does a back flip and a triple summersault over the tree hoppers. They stop glowing immediately.

Scarlett
You see? You are not the only acrobats in the forest.

Narrator
Scarlett sprints toward them again. She performs twenty back flips and executes a quadruple summersault and lands

right in front of them. She stares the tree hoppers down.
The tree hoppers stare back. She starts dancing.

Scarlett

You are not the only ones who can dance.

Narrator

Scarlett does a standing back flip and lands in a hand stand. The tree hoppers stare at Scarlett. They each let out a loud howl. Tree hoppers begin springing up from every corner of the forest. Each one lands with great force. Scarlett remains in a hand stand. After thirty seconds, every tree hopper on Stanton Island is by Scarlett. There are thousands of them. Each tree hopper executes a back flip and lands in a hand stand. Scarlett performs a flair ninety and lands on her feet. The tree hoppers perform a flair ninety and land on their feet. Then Scarlett howls as loud as she can. Then the tree hoppers howl as loud as they can. Then Scarlett wakes up.

Scarlett

Mom.

S Nice

What is it Scarlett?

Scarlett

We need to change our plan before it is too late.

S Nice

Why do we need a new plan?

Scarlett

If we do not change our plan, we will kill all the tree hoppers.

S Nice

That is a good thing Scarlett. The tree hoppers are dangerous. They are going to kill us if we do not kill them.

Scarlett

I had a dream. I became their leader.

S Nice

We cannot take any chances Scarlett.

Scarlett

The dream fairy told me to show the tree hoppers that they were not the only acrobats in the forest.

S Nice

It was just a dream Scarlett. Dream fairies are not real.

Scarlett

If they are not real, how do you explain our magic rings?
How do you explain everyone having the exact same dream about Dreamland?

Champion

What is going on?

S Nice

Scarlett had a dream.

Scarlett

It was more than just a dream. It was one created by a dream fairy. We need to change our plan before it is too late.

Champion

What do you propose?

Scarlett

Let me go outside. Let me show them that they are not the only acrobats in the forest.

S Nice

I am not letting you go outside Scarlett.

Scarlett

You have to mom. With the tree hoppers on our side, we can defeat the Saxons.

Champion

She does have a good point.

S Nice

I am not letting my daughter get ripped apart by tree hoppers.

Narrator

The dream fairy that gave Scarlett the magic rings appears.

Fairy

You must let her go S Nice. It is the only way.

S Nice

You are real?

Fairy

Yes.

Champion

Is what you say true? Is partnering with the tree hoppers the only way to defeat the Saxons?

Fairy

It is the only way.

S Nice
What if my daughter is killed?

Fairy
If you do not let her go, you will all die in the war against the Saxons. You must partner with the tree hoppers. You must let Scarlett go. It is the only way. There is not much time. Hurry before it is too late. Then S Nice wakes up.

S Nice
Champion.

Champion
I know.

S Nice
You know what?

Champion
I had the same dream.

Scarlett
Mom.

Narrator
She shouts.

S Nice
I know.

Scarlett
You know what?

S Nice
I had the same dream.

Champion
I need everyone's attention.

Narrator
Everyone wakes up.

Champion
There has been a change of plans.

Everyone
We know.

Champion
You know what?

Everyone
We had the same dream.

Champion
Good. That means we are all on the same page. I want everyone to take a gun.

Narrator
Champion directs everyone to the roof.

Champion
I want everyone to provide cover for Scarlett. If the tree hoppers attack her, I want you to blast them. Scarlett, I want you to go between the first and second perimeter. I am going to trigger the flames. The flames will get the tree hoppers' attention. I want you to flip in between the flames.

Scarlett
Yes sir.

Narrator

Scarlett jumps off the roof. Champion ignites the flames.
Tree hoppers begin emerging from the forest.

Champion

Okay Scarlett. Start flipping.

Narrator

Scarlett begins performing backflips and summersaults around the house. The tree hoppers are imitating her. She is not aware of it, but thousands of tree hoppers are executing back flips right behind her. She executes three hundred back flips back to back and ends with a triple summersault. She sticks the landing perfectly. She does a standing back flip and lands in a hand stand. All the tree hoppers do a standing back flip and land in a hand stand. Then she does a flair ninety and lands on her feet. Then all the tree hoppers do a flair ninety and land on their feet. She howls as loud as she can. All the tree hoppers howl as loud as they can.

Scarlett

I need your help. The Saxons have captured my friends. The Saxons are coming to kill me and my family. With your help, we can defeat the Saxons. Are you with me?

Narrator

All the tree hoppers begin howling and dancing. Then the tree hopper wakes up.

Tree hopper

Wake up tree hopper 2.

Tree hopper 2

I know.

Tree hopper
You know what?

Tree hopper 2
I had the same dream.

VII. Saxophoneous

Narrator

Today is the first day of fall. The Echelons have yet to decode a single S Nice poem. In contrast, the prisoners have deciphered every S Nice poem. They plan to begin escaping today. There are hundreds of thousands of prisoners in the cafeteria. Each prisoner is responsible for throwing their own trash away. The trash is thrown into a trash dispenser that is three feet wide. As each prisoner throws away their trash, they inconspicuously jump into the trash dispenser. The guards do not suspect a thing. This is because it is expected that each prisoner exit the cafeteria after they finish throwing their trash away. They are expected to exit and get back to work. More than half the prisoners escape before the Saxons notice. As the prisoners land in the green river, they are greeted by Champion, the group, and every tree hopper on Stanton Island.

Champion

Are you ready to take this Island?

Everyone

Yeah.

Narrator

They shout.

Champion

I said are you ready to take this Island?

Everyone

Yeah.

Narrator

They shout even louder. Champion hands out armor and weapons to every prisoner. S Nice has written on the armor and weapons, making them become covered in gold ink. Their army is a half million soldiers strong and ready to fight. Titans begin emerging from the prison. There are two hundred thousand Titans. They charge toward the group.

Champion
Attack!

Narrator
Champion's army strikes the Titans hard. Their gold plated armor and weapons cause most of the Titans to immediately turn into gold statues. Stratas begin emerging. They, too, rapidly become gold statues. A tree hopper and Titan have a face off.

Titan
I will squash you like a bug.

Narrator
The tree hopper begins glowing and dancing. It hypnotizes the Titan within seconds. The tree hopper steals the Titan's sword and jumps four hundred feet into the air. The tree hopper summersaults in the air. As it begins charging back to the surface, it points the Titan's sword down. The sword penetrates the Titan from the head down. A large cloud of dust fills the air. When the dust has cleared, the tree hopper remains in a hand stand between a Titan split in half.

Champion
Take no prisoners!

Narrator

All the Titans and Stratas are killed or turned into gold statues. Only the Echelons remain.

S Nice

They are heading for the ship!

Narrator

The Echelons have engaged the mother ship. Prisoners, still inside the prison, attempt to stop them, but the Echelons are able to escape. One hundred thousand Echelons are inside the mother ship. The ship rises from underground. The ship is now four hundred feet in the air.

Scarlett

They are getting away!

Narrator

Scarlett tries to jump to reach the ship. In her right hand, she has a gold sword.

Scarlett

Do not let them get away. They will terrorize and enslave more people.

Narrator

Scarlett closes her eyes. She believes, hopes, and jumps. She jumps five hundred feet into the air. Champion, the army, and all the tree hoppers watch her soar through the air. She lands on top of the mother ship. She takes her sword and pierces the ship. The ship, and everyone inside the ship, turns into a gold statue. The ship begins falling. Scarlett leaps off the ship. She summersaults through the air and lands with great impact. Dust fills the air. When the dust has cleared, Scarlett remains in a hand stand between a ship split in half.

S Nice

Stanton Island is Saxon free. A new era it will be. The pollution will waste away as we reclaim the land today. The dungeon is now a paradise in the hearts and minds of all. We will live together in peace and together in peace we will never fall. Remember always this day. Remember always this fight. Remember the day the Saxons had their final plight. Remember always this day when we arose from the final slope. Remember always this day as the first day of Planet Hope.

Narrator

Then Arpeggio wakes up.

Arpeggio

Dad.

Ebiasaph

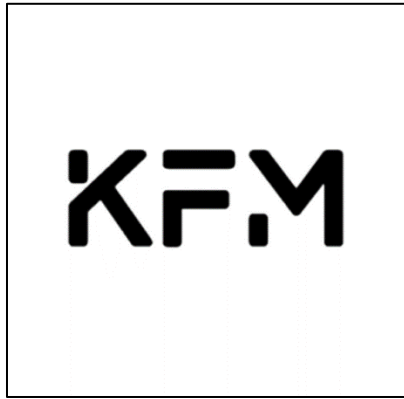
I know.

Arpeggio

You know what?

Ebiasaph

I had the same dream.



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