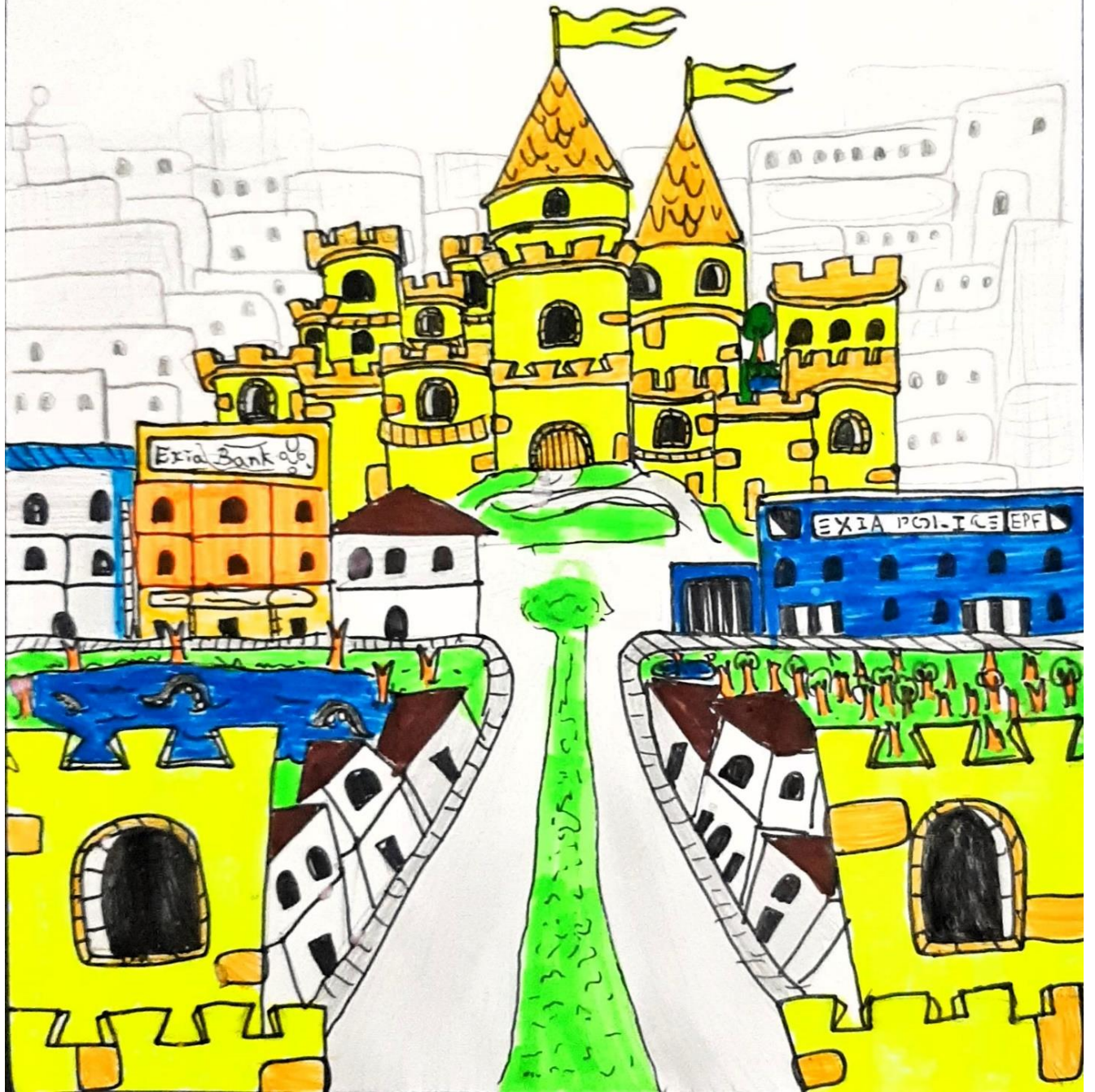


# THE REALM of EXIA



## Author's other books

*Story of a Naughty Kid* 2020

*Ancient Adventure* 2022

Written by Okith Karunarathna

Illustrated by Okith Karunarathna

Storty by Okith Karunarathna

Dharmaraja College Kandy

Grade 9

**TO MY LOVING BROTHER,  
THELAN**

Foreword Literary development is a yardstick to measure the development of a country. The Kotte and Dambadeniya eras stand out in the history of the world because they were literary enlightening periods. If so, this is the golden period in the history of the Mahamaya as well. This is the reason why our daughters have been enchanting through book writing for many years now. It is a special event that our writers have succeeded in building a culture of writing books in the school and spreading it to the entire school system and this time involving the global student community in it. Beyond this, this time the school community itself has also decided to rebuild the past Yatiwara writing tradition in the country in order to pay tribute to the founder of our school, Karadana Atthadassi Thero. The Pirivena student monks have also taken up book writing “The Herana Gatkarani “ project was introduced. It is a matter of pride for me as the principal to lead the way in bringing about a qualitative change in the education of schools and Pirivena education through this academic and religious service, and it is also an achievement for the school. This book, which is the result of recognizing one's innate talent at an early stage in life and turning to writing, will undoubtedly be a help for future education and future life. Shashikala Senadheera, Principal, Mahamaya Girls’ Collage, Kandy.

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# PROLOGUE

Millenia ago, the Conquering Knight was tired of the ongoing wars and crises of humanity. It had lost faith in his species as a whole and considered it to be insignificant.

As a result, the great Knight destroyed the crude forces of humanity and harvested their very souls using the power of its will.

Eventually, it gathered 100 angered souls and wiped their knowledge of everything. Then, the mighty Knight multiplied the souls, creating artificial ones all with the power of its will.

Then, the Knight wanted to finish its plan. The Knight deigned to create a new realm. The Knight discovered a small cave in the depths of the Earth, and it found a soft bit of soil in the center of the room.

It coursed its will through its blade and struck the soil with full force. A mighty dark atmosphere filled the cave as a new Realm formed with the souls taking new physical forms. This new Realm was named "EXIA" by the Conquering Knight.

Though the Knight was a menace of society at that time, the Realm he created was a peaceful place with distant rays of magical light.

This new Realm was a Legend of HOPE.

This new Realm was a Legend of DREAMS

This new Realm was the

Legend of EXIA

## CHAPTER 1

# DARKEST HAZE

Although there were many interesting things that happened in the past (such as the Conquering Knight). Not many interesting things were happening at the present (A.D 2024) in Axel's life.

Axel was a thirteen-year-old teenager who always had messy hair and a friendly smile. Though his life is about to get a lot more interesting...



Axel woke up late at 7.00 a.m. in the morning. He speedily brushed his teeth and got dressed, ate a bit of cereal, and left for the school-bus after saying goodbye to his mom.

He arrived at his class at around 8.00 a.m. as he entered the classroom, discovering his first period grumpy science teacher Mr. Heat

selecting a student to go and fetch a plant with a tap-root system from the school garden.

“AXEL!” yelled Mr. Heat “You’re LATE! I will not stand you entering MY class after 7.45 a.m.” Scolded Mr. Heat.

“Actually, Axel... I was thinking of a more severe punishment... But, this time and THIS TIME ONLY, I’ll give you an easy task, go fetch a plant with a tap-root system. But NEXT TIME IT’S STRAIGHT TO THE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE YOU GO, and God knows what punishment Principal Goil will make you suffer!” continued Mr. Heat.

Axel gulped as he settled down his backpack on his chair and hurried on over to the school garden.

He, like most other students, despised Mr. Heat as he had a high temper and got mad easily.

Axel made his way over to the school garden and explained to the gardener there, Ms. Hearth that he needed a plant with a tap-root system.

“Oh! uh... let’s see... Ah!” Ms. Hearth exclaimed. “You can have that small Ficus plant right there...”. Ms. Hearth pointed to a small, old looking Ficus plant in the corner of the garden.

“Thanks Ms. Hearth!” replied Axel. He went over to the Ficus and noticed that it looked a bit odd. The plant had a pure black stem and pure black leaves, even the soil seemed to be as dark as a black hole.

Reluctantly, Axel picked up the flowerpot that the Ficus was in. Actually... he didn’t. The pot seemed to be fixed to the ground. He tried harder to lift the pot up from the Earth, he failed miserably.

He didn’t want to bother Ms. Hearth by asking her for a different plant because he decided not to because he thought it would look like Axel couldn’t lift a literal pot.

He decided to unearth the plant from the soil in the pot. So, he gently grabbed the stem and yanked it out of the soil. He had succeeded.

Or so he thought. Unexpectedly, a misty dark fog erupted from the spot the stem was fixed. The fog swallowed Axel in its dark haze.

The fog reduced and eventually went away as the Ficus plant had conveniently dropped back to its original position.

Though when everything seemed to be normal again, Axel was nowhere to be found.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE FALSE KNIGHT

When Axel was swallowed by the fog, he felt a strange sensation, it felt like he was being teleported (which feels like your whole body is disintegrating).

“AHHHHHH!” Axel let out a scream of fear as he suddenly fell into a dark room covered with moss and vines.

“Uh... Hello?” Axel echoed. But nobody came.

Axel found this place to be quite mysterious and mysteriously horrifying, it was as if he could feel a powerful aura of a terrifying presence.

Axel looked up, down, left, right and behind him but there was no visible way out of the room except a dark hallway that was right in front of him. Axel obviously had no choice whatsoever and he progressed forward.

He eventually came across a huge door almost three times the size of him. Not having a choice again, Axel huffed and puffed and pushed the mighty door until it suddenly swung open.

Axel went beyond the door and he could somehow feel a powerful presence in the room.

“Human...Human...Human...” mumbled a strange voice in an unfamiliar language.

The voice shrieked loudly as the owner of the voice appeared. It was a figure of a seemingly humanoid being and it was wearing a tattered hooded cloak. But Axel knew that something was wrong with this person as soon as he saw that the figure's eyes were glowing a great bright red.

The figure then looked head on at Axel, revealing a skeletal body with a few stains of blood. The figure shrieked as he locked his strange eyes on Axel's.

“Ah! What a pleasant surprise!” spoke the figure in a cold voice, “I have not seen a *real* human being ever in my centuries of existence.”. Alex was very confused, frustrated, frightened.

“Oh! Where are my manners? I completely forgot to introduce myself, well, I suppose I need to explain where you are... you have no idea where you are, do you?” said the figure.

The figure then explained the Conquering Knight, the power of WILL, and Exia (A.K.A the stuff you read in the prologue). “I’m not sure what I’m going to do with that information...” said Axel. “Are you braindead? THIS is Exia!” explained the figure.

“Oh, well that makes some sense, okay, wait who are you again?” asked Axel.

“I am a replica of the Conquering Knight created using the power of its *Will* because the True Knight was getting old and weak, living off the power of its *Will* alone, not daring to sleep or talk as to not break the *Will* and die, because as fearless the Knight is... the only thing it fears is Death.

“I was born to sustain peace in EXIA and rule the Kingdom as the True Knight retired, though the citizens began to get frightened of my own power, the True Knight used its power for good, while I was more reckless... I began to realize, I could be pals with everyone, I could incinerate everyone.

“I eventually figured that I was not the Knight, I was tired of being *HIM*, and so, I burned the Kingdom to the ground, putting his Legacy on flames.

“But most of the citizens escaped, and I was not as near as powerful as the True Knight could be, and so, the survivors rebelled against me, draining my power so that I was near *mortality*. I escaped to here.

“But there is one way I could get my vengeance, kill the True Knight, absorb his power using my *Will* and look upon the destruction caused by my new-found power... but there is a flaw, I am too weak, too weak to commit such an act of regicide.

“But there is a workaround, you. I thought for the last one hundred years, the Knight is human, and his power is simply *Will*. The power of *Will*, this power of... *Determination*, is this not something that all humans possess?

“If one was simply *Determined* enough, could they not have the same power? So, I have been waiting for a human to fall down here for decades... and here you are... even if you don't to kill the old Monarch of this place, you are required to as the only way to leave this place is to kill the Knight, thus, he will lose the *WILLPOWER* to keep this place intact, space and time in Exia will break, the dead will awaken,” “And YOU can get out, it's easy to get in, but it's had to get out” said the False Knight.

## PREPARATION AND INITIATION

Axel listened to the False Knight's speech. So, he had to kill an ancient king that's barely holding onto life, he thought. He did not want to kill the said king as he wasn't a psychopath... but it was his only way home.

"Okay." Axel lied; he knew that there had to be a workaround. He was determined not to kill.

"Anyways, I have some things for you," said the False Knight. "Here's a map of the whole Kingdom of Exia that also conveniently has all the beings you need to eliminate to actually go to and beat the True Knight.", the False Knight gave a map to Axel.

Three names were written in different places of Exia; 'Skiffrus' the guardian of the Amber Gear was somewhere in a secret chamber, and 'Xeolyus' the new ruler of the Kingdom was in a castle.

"Ah! Yes, I almost forgot, here's a belt with a satchel for storage, a sheath for... well a sword, and er... I think that's it." The False Knight gave Axel the belt.

"I suppose you might need a weapon so here's a rusty sword, it's the best I got." He gave Axel the rusty sword.

Axel went into the Knight's closet and equipped his gear.

"You are ready," announced the False Knight as he opened a great door and darkness spilled into the room, "Step into the darkness and fulfill your need to go back to what you call, "Home", when you go, I will lock this door and you are on your own..."

Not having a choice yet again, Axel stepped into the darkness and the same sensation of being teleported coursed through his veins as he appeared what looked to be a snowy forest. Axel looked at the map... there was no forest in the map.

Axel realized that the map was indeed the map of the Kingdom, but there was no map of directions to the Kingdom, so he really was on his own.



Axel ventured through the snowy forest, following the gravel path, he noticed a bush in the shape of a camera.

Axel went continued going along the path for about 33.58 minutes until he saw the exact same bush in the shape of a camera.

Then, Axel tried to go North, but realized that he didn't know where North was because there seemed to be no Sun, just distant rays of mysterious light. Axel was cold and scared. After that, Axel heard footsteps, he ran through the dense woods, afraid of whoever that was.

He was shivering and when he eventually came into an opening, just as he was about to go into the opening... he tripped.

Axel heard the distant footsteps... they got close.... And closer... until...

"Hey? Are you okay? Here let me help you u-up!" A soft voice called. Someone then helped Axel to get back up. "O-Oh... uh... th-tha-thanks!" Axel said awkwardly.

"Are you new around here? Are you searching for Frostwing Town? It's just there, right beyond the opening..." said the being.

The creature that helped Axel was wearing a green cloak and a red scarf.

"Well, hey! I'm Aristro, I'm a VoidHeart and uhh... wait... Are you a *Human?*" asked Aristro. Axel, who found this conversation to be quite frustrating, decided that he was armored and could potentially threaten 'Aristro'.

"Y-Yeah," Axel answered.

There was a deafening silence for a while...

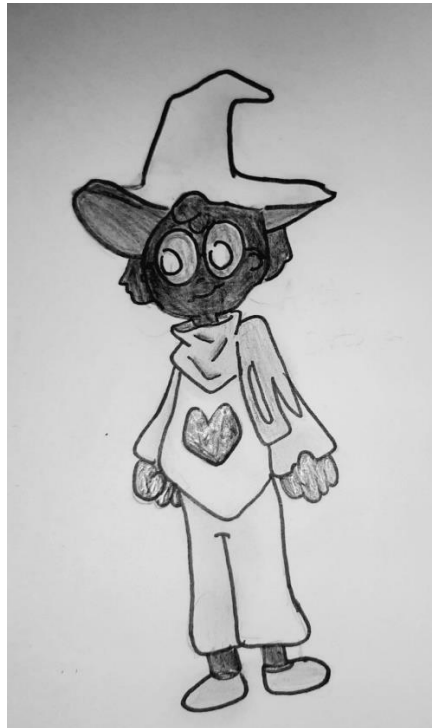
"That's cool! I mean, if you came here a couple hundred years ago... you would be dead where you stand. But the new king *Xeolyus* isn't as hostile

to humans as the knight was... wait, you don't know who 'The Conquering Knight' is, do you?" asked Aristro, "I actually do," Axel went on to explain how he received that information.

"So, you're not planning to kill the Knight or the other targets?" Aristro asked, "Nope" said Axel.

"Well, I'll let you figure that out, you can get to the Kingdom by that gravel path that leads out of Frostwing." Aristro helpfully said.

And so, Axel entered Frostwing Town.



# FROSTWING

Frostwing town was called 'Frostwing' because the town was on a little island shaped like a wing. And the little island had quite a few locations such as a motel, some convenience stores, two restaurants and various houses.

Struggling to find any defensive gear, Axel entered 'Flaniro's Goods'. As soon as Axel entered the convenience store, he was greeted with the sound of a ringing bell, and the voice of female creature.

"Hey there! We've got various goods for various beings for various occasions, what can I get 'cha?" said a skinny female creature that must have Flaniro, her entire body seemed to be made up of entirely flames.

"Er... I was hoping I could maybe get some armor?" Axel asked nervously. "Of course! I have just the thing that'll fit ya" Flaniro happily answered.

Flaniro went into a dark closet and rummaged through the items before grabbing a ruby chest plate, leggings, and boots. And a bright comfy scarlet scarf.

"Woah! These are awesome!" Axel said quite joyfully, "Of course, of course... now, that'll be 398 pieces of Shadow-Crystal!" Flaniro said joyfully.

"What!?" said the surprised Axel, "Oh! My mistake! It's 420 pieces of Shadow-Crystal with tax-included, ah! Silly me!" answered Flaniro.

"But-but-but, I don't have that!" said Axel.

"Well then then you BETTER. GET. OUT!" Flaniro announced.

Flaniro kicked Axel out of the store. If he was going to be a pacifist rather than committing regicide, he was going to need more defense than offense and that ruby armor was a must for Axel.

His only hope was to get some advice from Aristro on how to get pieces of Shadow-Crystal. And so, Axel went back the way he came to Frostwing and met Aristro on the way.

“Oh! Hello Axel!” greeted Aristro, “I need some help” said Axel. Aristro listened intently to Axel about how he got booted from the store. “Well Shadow-Crystal is the currency in Exia, and you can’t really find it, you have to earn it. The only way you can find it is by stealing some off the one and only Shadow-Crystal mine. And you can’t really steal them because nobody knows where it is, though it’s thought to be in a secret chamber and guarded by the old head of the Royal Army, Skiffrus” explained Aristro.

“Wait, the Skiffrus guy is one of the targets of the False Knight!” said Axel quickly, “Oh yeah! I also think I have something that will help you on defeating him.” Said Aristro.

“We’ll talk about at my place!” Aristro said, Axel followed Aristro to his home.

## CHAPTER 5

# RADIANCE

“This is my house!” Said Aristro overly joyfully. It was a small house that was painted black and white but had a calming presence on Axel once he stepped inside. The stuff in the inside were normal except the basement, which had spider-eyes, dead bats and strange liquids contained in jars, and a horrible collection of gigantic books with strange symbols and runes. And in the middle of the basement room was a giant cauldron.

“My parent’s aren’t here right now so I can show you this,” said Aristro mysteriously. “What do you mean?” asked Axel, “you’ll see,” answered Aristro.

Aristro started by putting hot water into the cauldron. “I need a strand of your hair” asked Aristro, before Axel could respond, Aristro plucked a strand of hair from Axel’s hair, “Hey! That hurt.” Said Axel, “Don’t worry, it’ll all be worth it in the end,” reassured Aristro.

Aristro dropped the strand of hair into the water in the cauldron, then, he put his hand over the cauldron, palm facing down, and he used magic to send an aura of something into the cauldron. The liquid in the cauldron was now red and blue in color.

“I need a piece of fabric from one of your clothes” Aristro asked, reluctantly, Axel ripped off a part of his polo shirt and gave it to Aristro. Aristro dipped the fabric into a strange liquid in a separate glass bowl. The Fabric quickly melted away into nothingness and the liquid in the bowl glowed a brilliant white.

Aristro tipped the liquid in the jar into the cauldron. The liquid in the cauldron quickly started to pulse and glow until the whole room was lit up by bright hot radiance.

Aristro took 5 glass jars and snatched up glasses full of the liquid. Axel was at a loss for words.

“What did you do?” asked Axel eagerly.

“This is known as the Radia potion, it gives the drinker the temporary power of powerful Radiant Energy, it’s not the kind of radiation in your realm, it’s a sort-of immensely powerful light energy in the realm of Exia. But, it’s very harmful to Exian beings as they do not have the capabilities to hold this power, but a human can. It’ll give you the ability to defeat Exian beings like Skiffrus with ease, it won’t kill him as he is very capable and more powerful than other beings in this realm and the powers of the Radia potion shouldn’t be enough to kill him, but it will probably knock him unconscious.” Explained Aristro.

“Oh, okay!” Said Axel, it seemed that Axel could actually use for offense than defense. He was happy about that because he thought taking the pacifist side of things would be hard and boring and non-adventurous.

All he had to do was to drink the potion. Axel thought of the power he would obtain, he could destroy almost anything, but decided not to as he wasn’t a psychopath. When Axel finally drank 1 bottle of Radia out of the 5, he felt a strange sensation going around his body. Then, after it was over, Axel felt like he could run for miles and miles without breaking a sweat.



“Right! Now give me your sword,” said Aristro, Axel gave Aristro his sword as the potion had worked wonders on him.

“Wow, your sword is absolutely garbage, let me fix that,” said Aristro, “Wait but I’m not going to hurt anybody!” complained Axel, “I know but there has to be a use for it” replied Aristro. He threw the sword into the remaining

drops of Radia in the cauldron, the sword too now had the same powers as Axel.

“An Exian being touching an object with Radia has the same effect of a Luster Purge Radia attack. A Luster Purge won’t kill beings like Skiffrus, but it will probably kill me, so you can get it.” Aristro explained, as Axel picked up the sword, he asked “Why do I need a sword?”, Aristro replied with “Look at it, it’s rusted and damaged, it won’t do anything to enemies, so it’s best that you use it for Radia attacks as they won’t kill enemies but greatly weaken them, also, inanimate objects have permanent radiant energy once inserted.”

“Also what’s a “Luster Purge” exactly?” Axel asked, “keep your arms like this” Aristro said as he put together his hands in a certain way, Axel copied, “Now concentrate very hard and imagine that a ball of deadly Radiant Energy is bursting out of your palms” Aristro said.

As Axel tried to do what Aristro said and concentrated very, very hard, a ball of white-hot fiery material formed very quickly in front of Axel’s palms and speedily traveled towards the cauldron as Axel toppled backwards. The cauldron was destroyed.

“Oh, sheesh, looks like I’ll have to fix that” Aristro said, He muttered something like “Octivera-Rol-Vellarius” and the cauldron magically repaired itself.

“WHAT WAS THAT!?” Axel asked, “A kind of weaker luster purge, that’s called a Radia Sphere.” Replied Aristro. “Well, whatever that was, I’m exhausted!” Axel complained, “Oh yeah, don’t concentrate that hard, it’ll probably deplete all of your energy, the energy that you use to run and stuff, not radiant energy. To form an actual Luster Purge attack, it takes great concentration and practice, so it’s normal that you can’t form one.” Aristro explained.

“And, um... my parents are kinda gone for a while, they went away to a town faraway for a business trip. So, I was hoping that I could come along on your journey, since well... I’m a VoidHeart! I can heal you and stuff with regenerative magic.” Aristro nervously asked. Axel replied with a heartfelt “Yeah! Of course, I’m gonna need some help!”.



## CHAPTER 6

# THE CRYSTLAN CHAMBER

“Are you sure that this is the way?” Aristro asked for the umpteenth time. “I’m pretty sure it is... wait, I think we’re here.” Axel replied. “Well where is-oh... I see.” Said the astonished Aristro. They had wandered into the forest, looking for the chamber that Skiffrus seemed to be in by using the False Knight’s map as their guide. They had now come across a giant structure with a sign near it, the sign read ‘CRYSTLAN CHAMBER’.

“‘Crystlan Chamber’, huh, well, guess this is it.” said Axel quietly.

When they entered the structure, they were met with an ominous spiral staircase leading deep into the Earth. Axel and Aristro climbed all the way down the stairs. What they witnessed there was beautiful.

“So many Shadow-Crystal...” Aristro said while being amazed by the beautiful glittering crystals. As they moved on forward in the chamber of crystals, they realized that several machines were digging up the soil in the very, very, very long and wide chamber.

“So this is the Shadow-Crystal mine, looks like I won’t have any trouble getting that Ruby Armour-” Axel stopped as soon as he saw the distant figure at the end of the Chamber.

“Yes, you will have quite a bit of trouble...” the voice of the figure echoed throughout the Chamber. It had to be none other than Skiffrus himself.

## CHAPTER 7

# THE CRYSTAL GUARDIAN

“Let’s get to the point,” said the deep voice of Skiffrus. “Why are you here? For I am the Crystal Guardian Skiffrus... And whoever trespasses into the Crystlan Chamber shall be destroyed by my blade!”

Skiffrus wasted no time and lunged at Axel while thrusting his blade forward. Axel quickly dodged the almost inevitable attack. Though Skiffrus was incredibly old and his extremely defensive armor was very heavy, he had no trouble lunging at enemies as fast as 30mph with his incredible experience and athletic skills he learnt while in the Royal Army.

Axel panicked and pierced the air with his rusted blade to try and look intimidating. Even though it didn’t work, PEW! As Axel had swung his sword, it created a Radiant slash of power that struck Skiffrus in the chest. And Axel wasn’t fazed at all from the power of Radia from his blade as it wasn’t his own power of Radia.

“Heh, not bad.” Skiffrus admitted, the brawl began.

Axel Slashed and Slashed and Slashed, PEW! PEW! PEW! PEW! PEW! Almost all his attacks hit Skiffrus.

Skiffrus attacked from his own blade, SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! Skiffrus used a barrage of slashes to try and destroy the trespassers, Axel skillfully dodged as he had played a bit of video games. And Aristro formed a magical shield for each of the slashes that targeted him as the shield spell finished very quickly.

But Axel couldn’t dodge forever, SLAAASH!!! An attack from Skiffrus directly pierced through his skin and badly hurt his leg. Axel fell as he could no longer walk properly.

“Oh! WAIT AXEL HANG ON!... Hectoro-Extro-Arstixus-LECROMBUS!” Aristro chanted a healing spell while aiming the palm of his right hand at Axel’s hurt leg.

Axel body started to glow white and a white bright light burst out of nowhere from the ground under Axel and he was feeling much better as his leg had now magically healed.

“You can’t escape the fate I have for you so easily BOY!” Skiffrus desperately called.

And the battle continued just like that. PEW! PEW! PEW! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH! (the whooshes are supposed to be the sound of the healing magic bursting out of the ground).

Until, “Ugh... Ugh... UGH...” Skiffrus was very weak after constant radiant energy bursts from Axel’s sword. “ARMOR... SO... HOT!” Skiffrus said. “BUT... YOU... WILL... PERISH...!”

“Nuh Uh.” Axel said before he put his sword in its sheath. Then, he quickly placed his hand together in a certain position and fired a concentrated Radia Sphere, thus, forcing Skiffrus to surrender.

“ARMOR... TOO... HOT!!” Skiffrus yelled as he dropped to the floor. “Oh no! We might kill him! Quick. Water!” Axel said to Aristro. Aristro chanted a spell and fresh water burst out of the ground under Skiffrus.

“Ah.... Much better...” Skiffrus delightfully said. “Now, what do you two want!?”. “What are you hiding?” asked Aristro.

“Ugh, fine. You dealt with me easily I do admit, but I am old and weary, if I was younger... you would be dead where you stand. But the only thing I am hiding... is the location of the vilest, daring, menacingly funny though short and chubby Exian ever to exist. He also happens to be even more powerful than the present-day True Knight. He is Jake, he is permanently imprisoned in Terra’s Vault, a secret prison for powerful beings such as him, a prison where every inmate is bounded by indestructible vines that store the host’s power.

“It is called ‘Terra's Vault’ because it is at the edge of Exia, the *edge of existence*, where some aspects of the real world, the real Earth, which according to some of your mythology, the Earth is a goddess called Terra or Gaia, that is why we call it ‘Terra's Vault’. The aspects from the real world are broken and somehow ‘glitched’. Those aspects are the vines.

“Jake states that *‘his body cannot be killed*, that he is somehow immortal. He managed to get to the True Knight and almost defeat him, but that was centuries ago, the Knight was more powerful though he had lots of trouble defeating him. I was still the head of the Royal Army and he only informed me that such a being exists. Before getting imprisoned, Jake told the Knight something very, very, interesting *‘I know here you will be, I have WON-WON-WON!’*, then he laughed and laughed, even I don't know the location of where the Knight is now, and the edge of existence isn't really an edge, it is deep beneath the Ly-Zarde Palace, guarded by the new King Xeolys, so, knock yourselves out, I'd love to see your heads decapitated.

“If you want the best chance of defeating Jake, I suggest you take care of everyone else you need to deal with before battling him, because it's obvious that your on some kind of mission, and the battle against Jake will get *red-hot*.”

Then, as Skiffrus was very tired from all that battling, he dozed off. But more importantly, it seemed like Axel and Aristro had ran into a much bigger problem than the Conquering Knight.

## CHAPTER 8

# RUBY RESISTANCE

PLOP! Axel dropped 430 Shadow-Crystal pieces out of the 789 that he stole on the counter in Flaniro's Goods (Aristro could not carry more than 789 more Shadow-Crystal in his magic wallet).

"The Ruby Armor if you will" Axel said, "And keep the change- actually that scarf looks pretty nice and cozy, only 10 Crystal too, so... yeah, the Armour and that red scarf please" Axel added.

Axel had got his revenge on Flaniro for kicking him out the store by giving her an exceptional amount of Exian Currency.

"But, how did you? – you know what, nevermind, here's the gear.... And the scarf, NOW GET OUT! I have more important things to take care of." Flaniro said. She was reluctant to give the items to Axel at first, but then remembered the amount of money Axel had given her, then she immediately gave it. Axel thought about what important things Flaniro had, then he decided that it was *totally probably nothing*.

Axel equipped the Ruby Armor and the Red scarf, and he was looking like he was up for an adventure. The Scarf covered up his mouth, so Axel looked very cool and mysterious.

Axel was ready to continue their journey, but he and Aristro were both starving. So, they went to 'Bob's Burger Place', and Axel ate the 'Classic Bob's Burger', 'Big fries' and had a soft drink, while Aristro ate the 'Classic Bob's Veggie Burger', a salad and drank water.

After devouring the above food, they left the fast-food restaurant and went along the gravel path that leads out of Frostwing. Then Axel wondered something.

“Wait a minute, Frostwing is an island, so if we’re following this path... aren’t we just going to end up on the edge of the island.” Axel curiously asked.

“Of course we are, this path leads to the docks, and we’ve made it!” Aristro answered and they had conveniently reached the docks while Aristro answered.

“Woah! These boats are so clean and comfy, which one are we taking?” Axel asked. “We’ll have to ask the guy that runs the docks, he’s right there.” Aristro answered and pointed to a figure a couple hundred yards away.

They made their way towards the guy that runs the docks. When Aristro asked the figure he answered, “All of em’ are already booked, yer could’ve come earlier and booked one y’know? If you really want to get to the Kingdom, use that one right there...” The guy that runs the docks pointed at a rowing boat that was in awfully bad condition. “Nobody books it cause it’s old, and not very safe cause the holes in it are being covered by duct-tape cause I really don’t get paid enough.... Now then, it’ll be 3 Shadow-Crystal for you to get across to the Kingdom.”.

Axel and Aristro didn’t know what to do, and didn’t have much of a choice, so they paid the guy that runs the docks and got on the boat, waiting for the guy that runs the docks to paddle them across to the Kingdom of Exia.

## CHAPTER 9

# STAR-BOUND

“Wait, we have to paddle by ourselves!?” Aristro asked furiously, “Yep, Ain’t no way am I gonna waste my time rowing a wrecked boat. Buyers must paddle for themselves, that’s part of the reason why nobody’s booking this boat, it’s because it’s the only actual rowing boat, but I think it’s part of the experience y’know? You can dock it at the docks that the guy that runs the docks in the Kingdom runs.”

“We don’t know how to get to the kingdom!” Axel stated furiously, “Do you see that bright white light that looks like a star?” the guy that runs the docks pointed at a bright white light that looks like a star.

“It’s called the ‘Knight Star’, because we only have dim magical light created by the Knight when he created this realm, because he wanted the atmosphere in Exia to feel different, He decided to create an actual bright light like a bright star to mark the center of Exia, which is where the Kingdom is.

“They call it the ‘Knight Star’ because it once marked the great Conquering Knight, and the Knight is the literal heart and soul of Exia, the Knight pumps his will, his will to let Exia exist every minute or so.

“If the Knight dies, Exia’s grip on reality begins to loosen, and then it will be nothing but space.

“Sorry for the history lesson but just follow the Knight Star and go.” The guy that runs the docks said after he gave Axel and Aristro quite an important history lesson.

“I already knew that but OK.” Aristro told both Axel and the guy that runs the docks.

Without more time wasting, Axel and Aristro got paddling and headed towards the Knight Star, they headed Star-Bound.

It was a long 15 minutes 26 seconds 58.9 milliseconds and 32.08 nanoseconds after paddling aggressively that Axel started some conversation.

“So... How are we going to get past Xeolyus, he’s the King of the Kingdom so he’ll be extraordinarily strong right? Even though he protects Terra’s Vault, I’m sure that there will be some guards or foes that we’ll have to deal with.” Axel said.

“I’m not sure if anyone wants to bodyguard or protect Xeolyus strongly.” Aristro started.

“When the rebellion against the False Knight happened, Xonolyus Ly-Zarde was the one in the rebellion to defeat and overthrow him as the King. Xonolyus was an excellent Monarch, he kept the Kingdom and the whole of Exia in good condition and kept his people happy.

“Though when Xonolyus’s son, Xeolyus Ly-Zarde had been born about 130 years ago, everything changed, Xeolyus was next in line for the throne, and he longed for that power and could not wait any longer, and so, at the age of 19, Xeolyus committed the ultimate act of Regicide and murdered his father.

“It wasn’t until recently that Xeolyus had been found to kill his own father, so the people of the past thought that some horrible creature had killed Xonolyus and took his son as the new Monarch.

“Xeolyus was and is anything but an OK King. He doesn’t do anything for Exia and only stays at his palace because he gets treated like a Monarch from the palace’s eternal servants, and the citizens aren’t taking him as their King anymore, even though he is their King. It’s just some nice and generous creatures that are doing the King’s work for him.

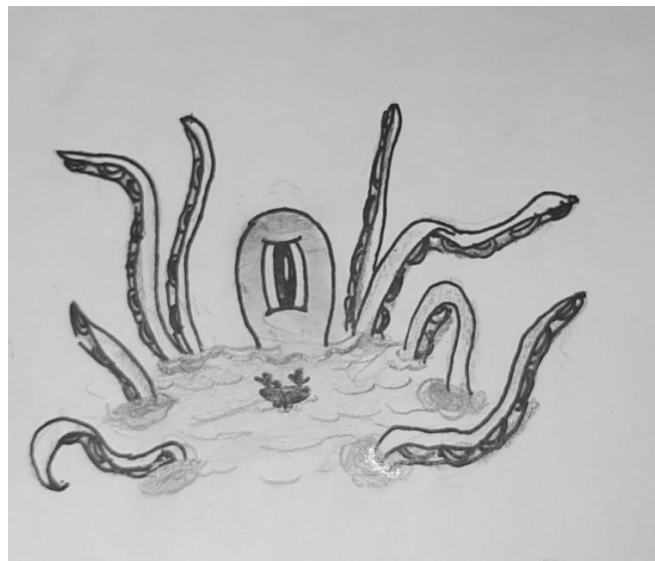
“When the people found out that their current King had killed off his own father because of some neat clues, the people had enough and they dared to engrave his title in history as ‘The Renegade Ruler’, as he was a

traitor to his people. Though it is said that Xeolyus has a cruel and dangerous group of followers called Xeols.”

After Aristro had given a history lesson this time, Axel noticed a very loud swift *SWOOSH!* And then another, and an another.

W0000SH! The two Pacifists found themselves drifting upon a huge dark watery wave. “W-w-w-w-w-what’s t-t-t-t-that?” Aristro stuttered and pointed behind Axel. The two friends were facing one another, and Axel was missing what was in front of the boat.

Axel looked back and saw a convenient giant octopus sea monster behind him. It seemed to have one gigantic eye, but Axel couldn’t look at the creature any longer and he jumped in terror and fear. He quickly drew his sword and prepared for battle after getting goosebumps from fear. “It’s a Cytopus! Very offensively powerful though defensively weak!” Aristro stated a short and helpful description of the monster before they engaged into battle.



## CHAPTER 9

# CYTOPUS

“Make sure to aim Radia attacks at it’s eye! It’s the weak point!” Aristro shouted to Axel over the loud crashing waves, though it had hid it’s eye underwater. Axel blasted 5 Radia spheres continuously at a large tentacle after hearing Aristro’s advice. “Oops!” Axel pretended that he missed.

It was hard to hear anything because the Cytopus had created a whirlpool where it was and it was created very loud vibrations through the water.

“Wait until it’s eye appears out of the depths! Until then it’ll just blindly lash it’s tentacles! It should go down in one Radia attack! Until then, SURVIVE!” Aristro shouted violently. “OKAY!!” Axel shouted more violently.

*BANG! CRASH! SPLASH!*

An enormous tentacle appeared out of the depths and lashed at the small rowing boat, shattering it in half. The two friends were drifting away from each other and the Cytopus would clearly get them.

But Axel gathered enough courage to climb onto the tentacle and try to do... something. Something good didn’t happen, instead something awfully bad happened.

The tentacle went back into the depths and Axel quickly held his breath before he too went into the depths of the Exian sea. He saw the eye of the Cytopus, but it was too far away to aim at. The Cytopus tried to squish Axel but his armor protected him. The Cytopus lashed its tentacle around and around but Axel held on noticed a soft and tender part behind the tentacle.

**BLAST!**

Axel shot a Radia Sphere at the soft and tender part behind the tentacle. It didn't seem to do much damage to the Cytopus, but it was clearly hurt because it screamed a terrible screech and the tentacle submerged out of the water and lashed around but Axel was still holding on.

"Axel!" Aristro shouted to Axel. Aristro was skillfully dodging the tentacles on one half of the broken boat, "Here use these to go up!".

Aristro cast a spell and a magical spectral and solid small platform formed below Axel. Not knowing why Aristro did this because he could barely hear him, he jumped onto the platform, then Aristro formed another one, a bit above the first like a stair. The first platform began to disappear, and Axel jumped onto the second platform.

Then Aristro formed many more and Axel sprinted his way up all until he was almost at cloud height (If Exia had clouds on the same level as Earth). Then, Aristro formed four platforms continuously like a square on the same Y-Axis. Axel jumped on and on going around in circles until he realized what Aristro was trying to do.

The Cytopus was incredibly mad at Axel for attacking it and so, the Cytopus submerged out of the water to get a better view and destroy its enemy.

When Axel saw this golden opportunity, he jumped off of the platforms and once he got close enough...

**BLAST!**

Axel aimed and shot a Radia sphere directly at the Cytopus's eye while airborne. It almost instantly went back into the depths, the tentacles going away and the multiple huge waves and whirlpools to slowly go back to being the regular Exian Sea.

All was well, except for the fact that Axel was falling midair into water at around 39.67 kmph (If you fall into water from a long height, it's the same as falling into hard concrete). Axel had played a video game where water

reduces fall-damage and didn't really know anything about how physics works because school doesn't teach that in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Nevertheless, Axel died a horrible death. I'm joking of course. But he did hit the water at absurd speeds, but his ruby boots greatly reduced the damage that would have been done to Axel.

*AAAAARRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGHHHHH!!!*

His legs felt very wrong and painful though, but Aristro swiftly healed him as Aristro came up to Axel and dragged him to one half of the boat.

Aristro used a drying spell on both to get rid of the wetness. "That was awesome!" Axel said, but Aristro was on edge, "That was stupidly dangerous... But, we got through it!", Aristro was not on edge.

They then searched for the other half of the boat for around exactly 20 minutes and then Aristro repaired it using a spell and they continued their journey to the bright Knight Star.

## CHAPTER 11

# THE KINGDOM

“Also, how did you know that I was human? Nobody else has no idea what I am.” Axel brought this question up in a conversation with Aristro, “Well, unlike some beings, I actually get excellent scores in my subjects, and I know a respectable amount of things about the human race. Also, not a lot of beings are good at the school subject ‘Creature Education’, about beings’ anatomy’s and such, nobody really gets good marks at it, but I’ve always gotten over 146%” Aristro replied with pride. “OK”, Axel said.

After a painful time of paddling, they finally made it to the Knight Star, and the docks at the Kingdom. They swiftly gave the boat to the guy that runs the docks in the Kingdom and hurried towards the entrance to the Kingdom. And though it was a mighty large Kingdom, the many homes and other buildings were in awfully bad condition. The only structure that was in excellent condition and stood out the most was a large gold castle with bright white lights being emitted out of it.

“That’s where we have to go!” Aristro said and pointed at the large palace, “That’s the Ly-Zarde Palace, home of Xeolyus Ly-Zarde, we need to somehow break into there.”

“What are we waiting for then?” Axel said before they rushed off towards the palace. The Kingdom had many surprises waiting for them.



As they walked towards the palace, looking at the depressing nature of the Kingdom's condition, Axel saw a poster on the wall, specifically, he saw two posters. What they read scared Axel immensely, they read: 'Human: Wanted for 10,000SC' and the other one read 'VoidHeart: Wanted for 7500SC'.

"GOTCHA!" a voice said, CRASH! A spear struck the ground between Axel and Aristro at insane speeds, they looked to where the voice and spear came from. They saw Flaniro in full battle armor, it was hard to recognize her when she was fully covered in armor, but they could clearly see the familiar braid of flames on her head that was coming out of a small hole on the backside of her helmet.

"17,500 Shadow-Crystal... That bounty is *MINE*." Flaniro said in a deep voice, and so, a battle against a true warrior began.



## CHAPTER 12

# BATTLE AGAINST A TRUE WARRIOR

Flaniro picked up the spear at impossible speeds, "I USED TO BE THE NEW HEAD OF THE ROYAL ARMY!" Flaniro stated, CRASH! The spear barely missed Axel, CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! Many more attacks barely missed Axel and Aristro. Axel had no time to retaliate via a Radia attack because her attacks were so fast.

*POOOOOOOOW!*

The spear pierced Axel when he tried to dodge by trying to face the other way and a deep cut was formed across Axel's chest. Axel had so much adrenaline rushing through him that he couldn't process all the pain and it didn't hurt much for him.

"I USED TO BE THE NEW HEAD OF THE ROYAL ARMY UNTIL XEOLYUS KILLED OFF THE ENTIRE ROYAL ARMY FOR FUN AND I WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT MANAGED TO FLEE!... I WILL BE YOUR RECKONING."

Axel did not listen and concentrated immensely hard out of pure rage and retaliated with multiple immensely strong Radia blasts,

**BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!**

Axel was immensely exhausted after the multiple attacks, so Aristro healed his wound and exhaustion with complex healing magic. "WE'RE TRYING TO ASSASSINATE XEOLYUS!" Axel lied; he had few intentions of killing the Renegade.

"I COULDN'T CARE LESS! YOUR BOUNTY WILL SET ME UP FOR LIFE!" Flaniri stated. Axel and Aristro found this statement to be insulting.

The Radia attacks from Axel did not seem to have even flinched Flaniri, though her armor was hot and burnt and emitting smoke. Flaniri could not have felt better about her health.

Axel had no idea on how to deal with Flaniri, but Aristro had a brilliant idea. Aristro cast a spell on their boots, and he simply told Axel, "Follow my lead!" as he began sprinting on the wall of the nearby building. Axel was surprised but he quickly followed Aristro with his new magic boots.

As Aristro went up and up, Axel followed and attacked Flaniri at the same time. Flaniri brainstormed ideas for about 3.2 seconds until she thrust her spear into the wall and began climbing while holding onto her spear.

Axel began to stop attacking and just wall-ran to the top of the building, and both the friends kept running and dodging the occasional spear. But once they were tired enough, Flaniri would pierce their hearts.

After what seemed like forever, Aristro and Axel became very tired, they had spent all their remaining energy climbing the scaffolding of a tall building in-construction and they thought that Flaniri couldn't climb it because of her heavy armor and because she didn't have enough room in the building to thrust her spear in, they were correct, but they unfortunately didn't think about all the other ways that Flaniri could obliterate them.

Flaniri was Tactical, Determined, Strong, Stubborn, and *smart*. She gathered up enough energy to throw her spear with enormous amounts of strength into the scaffolding, which also struck the building it-self, and the spear completely destroyed its way to the other side of the building and broke all the scaffolding on that side.

Axel and Aristro had no way to get down, they couldn't use the scaffolding because there weren't any, and Aristro was too tired to cast a



They had won. However, they could not celebrate their victory for long as the fight had drawn many witnesses, and some were Xeolyus's followers in the crude kingdom. And just below the crumbling building were a group of humanoid creatures with masks with the letter 'X' drawn on them with blood.

"Axel! Quick! We have to hurry, those are Xeols, as people call them... They're Xeolyus's followers! And I think-" Aristro got cut off as the Xeols started to strike the building with bloody axes, "-Their trying to capture us!" Aristro finished.

## CHAPTER 15

# WANTED

Axel and Aristro jumped down from the building, but just before they could hit the ground, Aristro cast a levitation spell that stopped them midair. They both ran across the air to the Ly-Zarde Palace, they were almost at the palace before *Wooosh!*

The Levitation spell's duration ended, and they both fell, it was only 2 feet fall so they ran and ran until a Xeol finally caught up and pinned them to the ground, Axel got ready to obliterate.

Axel let out Radia Sphere after Radia spere repeatedly until all the Xeols were trying to get up and fight back, Axel noticed a huge crowd of Xeols coming from the Palace, how could they get to the palace now?

Thankfully, Aristro was fired up and filled with energy from adrenaline. He muttered, "Livitia-Sondras-Eruptigalio!", and *WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!*

They both left the ground and got sent flying towards the Palace at insane speeds, they travelled a distance of 6km in 10.35 seconds! When they got closer to the palace, they redefined the laws of physics as they slowed down instead of gaining momentum and came to an abrupt stop on the top of the palace.

Axel did not wait 1 second and immediately blasted a hole on the very top of the palace and jumped down.

They landed in a fancy hallway filled with paintings of Xeolyus. Then they saw a large door at the end of the hall. They walked towards the door

while looking at the paintings of Xeolyus. Most of them depicted him gazing down on the kingdom while it burns, some were portraits of him, and some depicted him eating snacks while torturing his prisoners in Terra's Vault.

They eventually made it to the big door, it had a small sign next to it saying 'THRONE ROOM'. They were going to face Xeolyus in the throne room, they were exhausted from defeating Flaniro and fleeing from Xeols without a break. But Aristro used a healing spell to regain some of their energy. They thought about going back to the outskirts of the kingdom to prepare, but they could hear the shouting of Xeols getting closer and closer. And wasting no time, They pushed the door open.

The Throne Room was incredibly fancy and royal, with a bright red carpet leading to the throne. The walls were decorated with banners and nice architecture. Though Xeolyus wasn't there. Then they noticed that the throne was off center and when they went closer to the throne, they found a secret hatch, on it was a dusty label. The label read "Terra's Vault".

"This is it!" Axel exclaimed, "We don't even have to fight Xeolyus! We can just defeat that 'Jake' guy and we'll be good to go". "Lets go!" Aristro said, Aristro used magic to easily lift the hatch using levitation and there was a dark void beneath it.

"Huh?", Axel was surprised as it was just a dark inky void. "This is a Warping void. I think it'll teleport us to the vault". "Oh boy..." Axel sighed.

And without much hesitation, they jumped into the darkness.

## CHAPTER 16

# THE RENEGADE RULER

Axel felt the same sensation of teleportation when entering the Warp. But before he knew it, they were in Terra's Vault. It had sharp obsidian walls of pure black, they were no lights but it seemed to be dimly lit through magic.

"Human, you dare to step upon this realm?" echoed a voice. Axel and Aristro flinched at the unexpected sound. The sender of the sound appeared from the darkness.



"I am Xeolyus, the 'Renegade' Ruler of all of Exia, and you... Human, will witness the greatness of-" *B00000000000000M!* While Xeolyus was talking about his greatness, Axel fired a powerful Radia blast straight at Xeolyus. It didn't do much but it knocked him backwards, he hit the many obsidian bars in a prison cell. Xeolyus was fazed momentarily, and Axel was going to make full use of it, but then something unexpected happened.

Xeolyus was raging and was about to get up when a slight stabbing noise was heard and Xeolyus froze. Axel was confused but then, Xeolyus became grey and more grey, and his skin turned into ashes as his withered, bloodless skeleton fell out of the falling ashes. Leaving his clothes on the floor.

Axel and Aristro were really confused until they saw a scythe sticking out of one of the cell bars.

"Oh-Ho-HO! OH-HO-HO! Such Fun! Such Fun!" A bit high pitched and distorted voice echoed. Suddenly a short creature came up to the cell bars and grabbed the scythe. "Ah! The feeling of murder! Such a wondrous-wondrous sensation! Kids, You are trapped are you not? This Realm is a Prison, and I am the only free one!" The voice said.

"I am Jake-Jake! And would you kids kindly-kindly pull that lever? I will share my Freedom with you!" Jake asked kindly. Axel and Aristro looked at each other for a moment. Jake was supposed bounded in place by sentient vines in the cell, though he was not, it seemed like there were vines in the cell but Jake just kept reaping them with his scythe.

"Why do you have a Scythe in Prison?" Axel asked, "It teleports to me no matter where I am!" Jake said amusingly. Axel and Aristro decided that they had to defeat him to gain the True Knight's location.

"Okay, but you have to tell us the location of the Conquering Knight, the real one, deal?" Axel asked. "I don't see why not!" Jake said.

Axel pulled the lever, suddenly, some cell bars vanished, and the vines disappeared. "Come in! Come in!" Jake said. Axel and Aristro went into the cell.

## CHAPTER 17

# TRUE AND NEO CHAOS

“So can you give us the location now?” Aristro kindly asked, “Now, Now, Don’t be so hasty, hasty. I shall give you the location of the Conquering Knight if you play my game!” Jake said. “What kind of game?” Axel Asked, Jake replied; “Oh! It’s a very simple game you see...”, Jake hid the Scythe behind his back, and it suddenly vanished. *BAAAMM!*

The Scythe appeared above the two heroes and they just managed to back away as it struck the ground at mighty speeds, Jake continued, “...When the number of times your heart beats reaches zero, you lose! Lose! AhaHA!”

Axel knew that this was going to be tough battle, so he gathered up his confidence, “Oh yeah? Well I have to warn you, this is going to be as tough for you just like for us!”, “AhaHA! We’ll see! See! Now, now, Let the Chaos commence!”

Jake suddenly vanished and levitated above the heroes, to Axxel and Aristro, it was a battle to the death, to Jake, it was a game. Jake started singing as he started attacking.

Several energy beams appeared out of nowhere and it seemed impossible to dodge! Amid True and New and Real Chaos, Jake sang...  
(Note: Underscores mean you have to drag the word)

*"Everything I do is no Sin\_!  
Now let the chaos Begin\_!  
In, this, game, Everyone! will Lose\_!  
(AhaHA!)  
Now we are finally free\_!  
Everyone knows that~  
The BEST Place TO Hide is INSANITY\_!  
(AhaHA!)  
Meanwhile the world will spin\_!  
Round-and-round-and,  
Corrupting! REEEALIIIIITY\_!  
(Ahahahahhahahahahhah!)  
Chaos! Chaos! Let it Rain!  
All these thoughts are in my brain,  
I see now a world gone blind,  
That is how I found my mind!  
We're created,  
JUST to DIE!  
Mortal Sin's the reason why!  
You can't stop what HAS Begun~!  
Might as well have so much fun~!*

Axel and Aristro managed to dodge most of Jake's attacks, the beams of lights, explosions, levitating rocks and more. Axel had a rush of adrenalin and released the Radia attack he had been charging. Hitting Jake directly causing critical damage! Jake stopped his attacks.



“Ah-HA!” Jake exclaimed, “You kids are really keeping up! But no matter, matter! My Heart goes out to all you Sinners!”

Suddenly, a heart shaped object glowed red on Jake’s chest (not a real heart, the shape that we call a heart). Suddenly hearts of radiance appeared beside Jake and flew towards Aristro, he had no time to react and the Radiance knocked him back into the obsidian wall. The other Hearts targeted Axel.

Jake also teleported beside him occasionally to try to decapitate him, while doing so Jake began singing the finishing lyrics to his song.

*When hope is running low,*

*And the Shadows start to grow!*

*Theres a light inside your soul\_*

*Slowly SHRINKING In the COLD!*

*Yet deep, deep down you know,*

*Yet Darker you WILL go!*

*(AhHA!)*

*Your Worlds a Fantasy~!*

*Your Worlds a Fantasy~!*

*Your Worlds a Fantasy~!*

*The BEST place TO hide is INSAANIIIIITYYY!*

*Your Worlds a Fantasy~!*

*Your Worlds a Fantasy~!*

*Your Worlds a Fantasy~!*

*Your... World is a Fan-ta-SY!*

*Ahahahahhahahahahahahah!*

“Such fun! Fun!” Jake said as he settled down, “Well I can teleport you to the True Knight now.”. Axel was bewildered, “Huh? Aren’t you going to try and kill us some more?” he asked.

“I got bored.” Jake responded. Axel hesitated, “Well... OK, if you say so.” Axel said after pausing his intense panting. “Wait, couldn’t you just teleport yourself out of here then?” Axel mustered up some sense into him and asked. Jake semi-humbly replied, “Well, I think I have a bit more- actually, maybe a *lot* more power, so I simply cannot escape Terra’s Vault without becoming a mortal. And that’s no fun.”

“Why did you stop talking comedically evilly and start talking casually?” Aristro asked kindly, “Its hard, duh. I’m not very good with songs too, I spent like, two decades coming up with the lyrics to that song. So, do you wanna go to the Knight or what?” Jake answered.

For a few seconds, there was an awkward silence. “Okay this is awkward, see you!” Suddenly, a strange mist formed around Axel and Aristro in about 0.02 picoseconds and they were magically teleported away.

## CHAPTER 18

# ESCAPE FROM ETERNITY

There were in a misty chamber, it was incredibly luxurious with delicate paintings of a hooded figure in a lot of them, Axel recognized them immediately. "That cloaked figure, It must be the Conquering Knight! He looks exactly like the False Knight." Said Axel, Aristro looked uneasy, "Hey Axel, how'll you go back to your home? Y'know, Earth". Axel hesitated, after everything he had gone through, he had not yet thought of a solution to get to Earth without eliminating the Conquering Knight.

"I'm 69% sure that I can get help or something from him on how to get to Earth without killing him." Axel said unsurely, "So...", Aristro asked, "What about the other 31%?".

"..."

"Certain Death"

They passed a painting of the Conquering Knight holding what seemed to be a dying neutron star, he seemed to be preparing to throw it at a group of 34-58 newborn human babies, then just beside it was a painting of the Knight somehow throwing a Hyper-Massive Black Hole at an unsuspecting innocent human being. Then beside it was a painting of him somehow throwing a Supernova at a disabled old man.

In his head, Axel's brain calculated that his estimated chance of survival against the Conquering Knight decreased, as the percentage skyrocketed downwards from 69% to 7.8%. The Knight did not seem to like humans much from the way he was described in the paintings.

After a painful 40+ minutes of walking in the chamber, they found absolutely nothing that led to the Knight. They did find quite a few hidden rooms thanks to Aristro's magic. They did not lead anywhere and most of them had great treasures after a few booby-traps, though neither Axel nor Aristro brought up the idea to grab those treasures, because they judged the fact that there were quite a few (28) rotting corpses, one such room with a huge chest at the end contained many smoldering bodies of undistinguishable creatures, it looked as though red-hot lava dropped down on them and painfully incinerated them (there were indeed traces of lava on one of the booby traps with bloody spikes).

After 26 more minutes, they finally found an incredibly small button that was camouflaged with the floor, it was right behind where they teleported.

*Boop!*

Axel pressed the button, and he suddenly felt the sharp pain of teleportation as he appeared in another smaller chamber. Sitting on a cushioned throne was a skeletal figure with bright green light flowing out of the figure's skull's eye sockets. The figure bore a striking resemblance to the False Knight.

This was it. The Conquering Knight. The Final battle.

## CHAPTER 19

# THE CONQUERING KNIGHT

“Who are *you* to arrive *here boy?*” asked the Knight in a deep and menacing voice. Axel was terrified, the Knight looked and sounded terrifying, but, he knew he didn’t come all the way to the end for nothing. Axel tried to use fancy words to try and sound menacing, “Knight! I have come here to murder you on the orders of the False Knight! Though I have no intention of driving you into oblivion. I kindly ask that your majesty may bestow upon me the knowledge on how to go back to my home. Please, majesty, show me mercy”.

“I stand here, alone, in my darkest years, the end is near for me I know. Many have come to where you stand and failed miserably. I grow stronger as I drive my will through Exia, I have told no one except the challengers who have come here before you” The Knight said, “You boy! I see that you came into this world, unknowingly.”, Axel felt his hopes rise.

“However, I shall show no mercy, once I am strong enough, I will commit mass genocide on your race, for what they did to me. I was strong, I had an incredible gift when I came to this World, I was gifted with a power unlike any other, the power of *Determination*, a great gift given by a higher power. If I was simply determined enough, I could touch you, and you would be taken to the Realm of Shadows.”, The Conquering Knight announced without a hint of fear.

“Your journey ends here boy!”, Axel was going to battle the Conquering Knight, and Aristro was nowhere to be found.



Axel's arm had been put in a healing spell, it was healing considerably quickly, but being so close to death, Axel went unconscious.

"Oh no you don't" Aristro muttered to himself, "Revaro-Elytus!". Axel was suddenly woken up instantly by magic. Axel was very confused, "huh? Wha-? Whahappend?", Aristro wasted no time "Radious Atmalustro! That's the magical term for it, you summoned a *Luster Purge!*". Axel got to his feet. He saw the Conquering Knight, he seemed to be unconscious against the wall.

"Cool".

"How do I get out now?" Axel wondered aloud. But he suddenly wasn't concentrating on that subject anymore. As the Conquering Knight's blade floated up to shoulder height of the unconscious Knight. Then, unexpectedly, the wall behind the Knight shook and,

**BOOM!**

A kind of blue portal had been formed on the wall the Conquering Knight was against, he didn't fall into the portal, as another skeletal hand reached out and grabbed the floating blade.

***STAB!***

The skeletal hand thrust the blade into the backside of it's owner, the blade's tip emerged from the center of the Knight's chest, blood poured all over. The skeletal hand twisted the blade and there was so much blood that Axel felt as if he wanted to vomit ten times.

The other skeletal figure emerged from the portal and the portal made a weird sound and disappeared in a burst of light. The Stolen Blade flashed red a force wave went throughout the small chamber, at the same time, the Conquering Knight's corpse burst into ashes that floated up to the ceiling and vanished magically.

Revealing the Conquering Knight's murderer who was behind where his corpse stood only a few moments ago.

It was none other, than The False Knight.

## CHAPTER 20

# THE FALSE BATTLE

Of course, it wouldn't be that easy. "Oh, Heya' Axel! You're probably wondering how I got here.", The False Knight said, "You see, I just didn't know where the True Knight was, and that's why I sent you to find him. I'm perfectly capable of killing him myself. I've been secretly following you on your journey.

"All those things I said to you when you entered Exia? All lies. I just couldn't go to the real world and do it myself because of the risk of getting caught, then they would be cautious about my further existence. Anyway, thanks. The Space-Time continuum in Exia should shatter any moment now!"

There was an awkward silence in which Axel, Aristro and the False Knight exchanged looks. 30 seconds passed and nothing happened.

"..."

"What?" The False Knight finally said, "Why is Exia not falling apart? Unless... No! That couldn't have been!"

Aristro and Axel were confused, "huh?" Aristro asked, "What do you mean?", The False Knight replied, "The Conquering Knight, Exilius... Axel! Did he mutter a spell before you fought!?"

Axel looked uneasy, he tried to remember, "He did say something like... Soulsus-Arson-Transer?", The False Knight seemed to crack, "Soulonsus-Arkaneis-Tranzoro!?",

"Oh yeah, that's the one."

"That old bastard! I should have seen this coming."

Suddenly, CRACK! A little white ball of light appeared where The Conquering Knight's Carcass used to be. Then, SWEEEEEEEEEEEEEM! It made a weird noise and exploded, gradually getting bigger, phasing through the walls, and covering the entirety of Exia in a white light, then, in about a second, it turned into a white mist and concealed itself within the air.

"NO!"

"huh?"

"An old magic! You saw that ball of light Axel!? That's Exilius's Soul!", The false knight talked like a madman, "He split it throughout the entirety of Exia! You know how painful that is Axel!? It's like your veins exploding for eternity! In return, he keeps Exia intact through Sacrifice! Brilliant, Idiotic! You know what that means Axel!? I CAN'T KILL EXIA!"

The False Knight was so angry, he was terrifying. "Fools! This was my last act of Vengeance! I'll kill you, Axel! I'll kill you! I will take my rage upon you! I may be a fake! Though I am strong! I am the False Knight, and you shall feel my wrath!"

Suddenly, boss music played in the background. And a battle commenced once more. The False Knight thrust the stolen blade into the floor, suddenly, red hot fire erupted from the edges of the chamber and slowly spread towards the center.

"You will die here, stabbed, killed by magic or painfully burnt until death!" The False Knight said. The stone floor erupted and burst out, forming 7-foot stone golems. "Axel! I can handle the Stone thingies! You take the Knight!" Aristro called out.

Aristro ran towards a stone golem, Axel heard him mutter something like, "Antyvyro-minuesone-incanto!" and the golem was reduced to bits of stone.

Axel got straight to work, he fired Radia blast after Radia blast, fired slashes of Radia with his sword. Eventually, Axel and the False Knight were right in the middle of the chamber, the fire was cutting them off. They were very close to each other, and they began close combat, Their Blades collided, Axel's sword was on top of then Knight's, then, Axel stomped on the Knight's foot, causing him a sharp pain and removing his concentration form the collided blades.

Axel forced his sword down with all his strength, then, when the sword was right in front of the Knight's stomach, he thrust his sword with full force.

**KACHING!**

Axel's sword stabbed through the False Knight's thick flesh, a bit of blood dropped, then, Axel concentrated his full determination into his sword, and fired a Radia attack through the sword.

**BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!**

The Knight's Red lights in his eye sockets were hidden by the dazzling white light coming out of them, his whole body was glowing blood-red, and because of his blood, the light from the Radia blast was red. Axel already knew that he had performed a Luster Purge inside The False Knight's body. It was over. The False Knight was dead-

**ARRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGHHHHHHHH!**

"Axel!" Aristro called, through the last of the False Knight's strength, he had driven his incredible stolen blade right through Axel's heart, blood stopped rushing through his body, he felt extreme pain, and there he goes, the hero's dead.

"Axel! Axel! AXEL!", Axel woke up, "Five more minutes" Axel said sleepily, "Axel! You're awake!", it was Aristro. "Oh, hey" Axel got to his feet.

**..."**

“Am I alive?”

“I think so” said Aristro.

“Cool, are we at your house?” Axel asked, “Yeah!”, Aristro confirmed, “You were about to die, I did some temporary healing magic to keep you alive until we got to my house. I brewed a very complex Organ-Replica potion.

“It needed a very rare scale of a Flare-Wrath serpent Dragon, and an organ of the organ you want to replicate from a Regen Lizard. I was able to by all of it using the Shadow-Crystals we stole, I got them from a sketchy store, ‘Chorean’s Rarities”.

“Cool”

## CHAPTER 21

# AN ENDING

Aristro took Axel back to the Kingdom of Exia, where the people were celebrating the mysterious disappearance of Xeolysus. A new, better monarch had already been elected, 'Leozan Captava the 3<sup>rd</sup>'. Aristro took Axel to a dark alleyway and down an anonymous staircase, after reaching the end, there was solid wall of stone.

Aristro pressed the Palm of his hand on the wall for a few seconds, suddenly he phased through the wall. Axel copied what Aristro did, and he too went through the wall. They were now back in the chamber and the wall they had entered from was now a steel door. Aristro and Axel went to a peculiar blue door.

Axel opened the Blue Door, he saw that the end of the room was covered in inky black, it looked like a small black hole. It was vacuuming up things in its area, including Axel, who was barely hanging on to the Blue door, retreated and closed it.

"I saw this door when I was trying to find an exit, I'm pretty sure it leads to Earth, I saw a bunch of things like tress and one of those telephone things coming out of it." Aristro said. Axel trusted Aristro, and it was about time he returned to his world.

"See you!"

And just like that, Axel jumped into the blackness. He felt the sensation of being teleported once again and *Poof!* He was now on Earth, the Ficus plant in front of him. He stared out of the windows of the

Greenhouse, beautiful orange-yellow lights were pouring into the greenhouse. It was almost night-time.

He checked the calendar, Every date until February 15<sup>th</sup> had been crossed, it was the same day, it had been only around 15 hours on Earth, but several weeks had gone by in Exia. He looked back at the inky black Ficus plant and walked away. He though it was awesome, he was going to go back there some day.

*(Probably)*

***THE END***

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Afterward According to my concept, under the project that has been running since 2014 to direct school children to writing, we have been fortunate to have planted more than sixty thousand writer seedlings in the local literary field. The objectives of this project are to improve the quality of education, to promote literature that will contribute to the future development of the country, to hone the abilities of the future generation, and to build a platform to showcase the creations of children. It is our social responsibility to create the fertile soil for those seeds to sprout and grow. This is the only project in recent history that has been implemented continuously for several years at the school level, provincial, national and international levels for the sake of the productivity of education. This time, it is special that the Pirivena student monks have also been involved in this. The nation should be grateful for the dedication shown by the Principal, daughters, teachers, parents and alumni of Mahamaya Balika Vidyalaya. The printed book is still the main tool of our education. The enjoyment that a child gets from a book cannot be provided by anything else. It is experimentally proven that the use of various electronic devices to store human knowledge and the distancing of children from books has been detrimental to the quality of education and has created various problems in society. This project, which is being implemented as a solution to this, has been adapting the smart younger generation of the digital age to modern technology by writing electronic works for the past two years, together with school children in the country. To take their creations to international readers, Mahamaya girls have built a digital fiction for their own, literary creative abilities. My congratulations to the young writers who have entered it through their creative abilities. Project Founder and Coordinator, Senevirathne Maha Lekam