

Lila

Inspired by *The Running Dream*

I'm an Activist

I am an activist  
I fight for what I believe in  
I stand up for others when they can't  
I say that some things are wrong when everyone else is afraid to  
I make sure that everyone is heard,  
no matter who they are or where they came from

But sometimes I can't speak

Sometimes I'm lost  
Sometimes no one wants to listen  
Sometimes I am all alone because sometimes  
it's just me  
Just me standing there  
Just me fighting for what I believe in  
Just me feeling all alone and thinking that it's too hard

Being so little  
Feeling so small  
Being so tiny  
Feeling so invisible  
Because I'm only 12  
Only a kid that wants to change the world

Only a  
Little  
Small  
Tiny  
Invisible  
Girl  
That's just trying to help

Because this  
Little  
Small  
Tiny  
Invisible  
Girl

Just like everyone just has to remember that she has a

# BIG VOICE

Even though it feels like it's Just me  
Fighting for everyone

And in a world that is

sooo

## *Judgmental*

That  
Little  
Small  
tiny  
Invisible  
Girl  
Is trying

To stand up  
To be kind  
To fight back

I fight for others, for me

Oliver  
Writing from Pictures  
Quest for the Three Items

Henry trudged to the well in his village somberly past the thatched houses with their leaky roofs. Once again he had to walk to the well early in the morning to collect water for his family. After that he would have to collect the eggs from the chickens and chop the wood for the fire. Everyday was the same for Henry: boring, tiring, and long. The same things everyday in the same order.

Clomp! Clomp! Clomp! As Henry reached the well he heard the faint sound of a carriage.

*That could only mean one thing!* Henry thought to himself, *Someone from the Castle is coming!*

The reason why Henry was so excited was when someone from the castle was coming it meant something important was going on. Sometimes it was good and sometimes it was bad but at least it would be something exciting.

Henry rushed to get the water from the well and bring it home so he would hear what the messenger had to say.

By the time Henry reached his house the carriage was in the center of the village. Everyone started to crowd around it including Henry, the bucket still in hand. Two guards stepped out of the carriage, a messenger following close behind. The messenger unravelled a scroll in his hand.

“Villagers!” The messenger said. “I have news from the king. He says that if you can bring him these three items: the candle of strength, the boot of speed, and the apple of life, you will be rewarded with one-hundred bags of gold.” There were murmurs of excitement as the messenger and his guards stepped back into the carriage.

Henry was in shock. *One-hundred bags of gold!* He thought himself as he headed into his house to get ready to go.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Henry’s mother inquired, stepping in his path.

“I was just-” Henry was cut off by his mother.

“I don’t want you going looking for those items,” His mother told him. “Although life would be a lot easier with that money I don’t want you getting hurt.”

“I wasn’t going to go on the journey,” Henry responded thinking of an excuse. “I was just bringing the water in.”

Henry’s mother was silent, looking at him skeptically until she finally gestured for him to go in. Henry stepped inside, relieved. He walked to the small kitchen in his house and set down the bucket of water. His mother then entered the kitchen and poured the water into a pot which she then placed over a crackling fire.

While she did this Henry quietly crept to the back door of his house not wanting to alert her. Once he was by the door Henry opened it and raced out to his family’s horse.

“Henry stop! Come back here!” Henry’s mother shouted to him but he ignored her. Henry jumped onto his horse and it galloped away, far from the village.

Henry journeyed for many miles but stopped when nightfall came to rest. He was starving. He was in such a rush when he left he forgot to bring food. He knew he needed some rest though, so he lay beside a large tree and fell asleep.

The next morning Henry didn’t feel any better than he had the night before, he was still hungry and tired. Sleeping on the hard ground was not comfortable. He looked around for something to eat and eventually found a bush with many

blueberries. He devoured them grabbing them off the bush in bunches and shoving them in his mouth. When Henry was hungry no longer. He put some more berries in his pocket for later then hopped onto his horse and set off to look for where the items might be.

He searched until he found a cave that had light coming from inside. He jumped off his horse and walked in. Inside the cave there were many candles all lit, except for one in the center of the cave.

*The candle of strength!* Henry thought to himself as he walked towards it cautiously, aware that there may be traps. Fortunately for him though, there were none. Henry grabbed the candle and started to head outside. As Henry walked toward the exit he stopped like a deer caught in headlights when he found a man standing in his way.

“Hand over that candle boy!” the man yelled at him.

“It’s mine!” Henry yelled back. Knowing he couldn’t get by the man he then ran back into the cave.

When back where all the candles were Henry frantically thought of something to do. Then a brilliant idea popped into his head. Henry lit the candle of strength and set it down then put out another candle and held it in his hand.

“Got nowhere to go now!” The man told Henry. “Hand over that candle.”

“Alright,” Henry responded and tossed the regular candle to the man.

The man laughed to himself and ran off, back outside. Henry waited until he knew the man was gone then grabbed the real candle of strength and got back on his horse.

Henry traveled for another day and found a mountain which he came to rest by. As he was resting though he noticed something, the mountain seemed to have steam rising from the top of it like a chimney. Curious, Henry left his horse and climbed the mountain. When he reached the top Henry gasped. It wasn’t just any mountain. It was a volcano. Inside of the volcano there was a tower of stone that reached about five feet out of it. Atop this tower was an old boot.

*The boot of speed!* Henry thought to himself. He looked around himself for something he could reach it with but there was nothing. Left with no other choice Henry backed up, ran as fast as he could and leaped. He reached out as far as he could, trying to grasp the tower. Somehow he was able to grip the very edge of it. He heaved himself up onto it and grabbed the boot. He then jumped back to where he had once been and started down the mountain.

Henry searched for where the apple of life might be for weeks with no luck until he came across a beautiful sight. A cascading waterfall with crystal clear water, birds chirping and flying through the air, and many apple trees.

*This has to be where the apple of life is!* Henry thought to himself, awestruck.

He weaved through the trees looking for which one the apple of life was on. He came upon one which branches sagged because of all of the birds on them. There were many apples on the tree but there was one that stood out. It was the most beautiful apple Henry had ever seen! It had ruby red skin and smelled delicious. Henry picked it off the tree delicately and left the beautiful place.

Henry searched for home until he came upon a road where he found a trader. He asked him for directions and the trader pointed where. Henry set off that way and eventually found his village.

When he got there his family raced to greet him. They hugged him tightly and cried.

“Don’t do that again,” his mother sobbed.

“But I have the three Items,” Henry responded.

“You what?” his father asked.

“When I return these items to the king we’ll get the one-hundred bags of gold,” Henry said.

His parents and siblings looked at each other, stunned. They then jumped and sang and danced, in celebration with Henry.

## Wild

I sat there alone, scared, hopeless. Crouched in my den, which I had crafted with my own hands. WAIT. Hands isn't the right word. More like . . . Paws.

My nose wrinkled at the horrid smell in the corner. The bodies of all my leftovers that I had caught a while back. The stench coated my den, and I decided to get up and go for a walk.

As I walk, I think. I don't always know what to think about, but today was different. I kept having the same memory . . . at least I think it was a memory. I left the den and kept looking back until the thick fog blocked my sight of the dark little hole. This was my 42nd den I had lived in, for the past couple of months. Every night I go to bed, I have the same dream. But it's always just a flashback.

You see, I am not human, nor am I not human. I am a hybrid. I am part of a hidden tribe. The Jungle tribe.

I don't know how far I have traveled since I left home, all I know is, I didn't leave on purpose. I sat on the edge of a pointy cliff, overlooking a large body of water. I closed my dark eyes, and breathed in the sweet smell of salty air. Inside my head, I had a flashback once more.

*"Raven come!" Mother called in a sweet voice.*

*"Coming mother!" I called back as I pranced around a large jungle tree, attempting to catch my lunch. A small little monkey about the size my head.*

*"Raven come have lunch!" Father called back after I had refused to come until I had caught my lunch. I wanted to be a real part of the tribe, and I had to prove myself worthy. Because I was supposed to take over the throne.*

*Mother and Father are King and Queen of the jungle and we rule it all. I am their only child, so the burden will soon be passed down to me, when I'm old enough. I stared down at my paws until my vision became blurry, I had swiped at the monkey so many times, and yet my paws were still empty. We are supposed to be natural born hunters, and I didn't feel that way. My parents gave me lessons, on how to hunt. I was always good at it, unless I had to catch a monkey. I was the ONLY kid in the jungle, only kid of my breed. We are panthers.*

*Black panthers.*

*We are sneaky, we are sly, we are fierce. No other tribe will ever mess with us because they know what we are capable of, and our secret weapon. We have. . .*

*Magic.*

*The only kind on earth that have this power. We use it secretly without any one knowing, when we fight. The only magic I am able to conjure is speed. The fastest living thing on the planet, and that's me.*

*"But daaaaaad...!" I whined, trying to make him feel bad, so I could finally catch that idiotic monkey.*

*"Come Raven!" Father called, a little more harshly.*

*I dragged myself somehow over to the rest of my family, and munched on the little piece of meat I was given for lunch.*

*Then all of a sudden, a horn blew.*

*The battle horn.*

*“WE’RE UNDER ATTACK!!!” Father roared. He jumped to his feet and ran to the front of the jungle where he could see all.*

*“Raven hide! Mother screamed, a look of fear in her eyes. I will never forget the look I saw that day on my poor mother’s face.*

*I wasted no time, I took off sprinting deep into the jungle. Passing bright green trees, and vines tangling around my paws, but I kept going. Until my breath was cut short. I wondered who was attacking us. And then I knew, not because of my knowledge, but because I could see. A pack of our worst enemies.*

*Tigers.*

*Oh no!*

*Father always said only use your power in time of dire importance. Well that’s now, so I ran. And ran. And ran. I never stopped. The tigers were not going to give up, they kept chasing me. They wanted to tear our tribe apart. Starting with my family.*

*The tigers had caught up to me. Mother always told me, Never be afraid and you will achieve.*

*I stood up slowly, looking fearless, but inside I was quivering so much, my heart I could feel it thump painfully harsh in my chest. The tigers cleared a path, as the Tiger lord marched up to me. A snarl rolled through the air and into my soft ears. He whispered one word that changed my life forever. One word.*

*“Run.”*

*I didn’t waste one second, I darted across the jungle and that’s how I got lost. That’s why I never went back. I didn’t know if my family was alive or dead. Or if the tigers had taken over yet.*

*I never went back.*

As I opened my eyes, I noticed the world was not as it was before. I was at.....

The Jungle. Again.

I was home. I carefully took a step forward to make sure that it wasn’t fake, or a dream and yet..... It was real. A smile spread across my face, and my heart thumped faster. I beamed and kept walking.

I kept walking and waking and walking until I couldn’t walk any more. I sat down, at least I tried to sit down. I bent my knees slowly until they ached, but my foot slipped. And I went tumbling into the unknown. The only difference was it wasn’t the unknown.

It was where I last saw the tiger before I ran away. Which meant I was close to home. I sniffed out a trail of the panthers, that means they probably went for a hunt looking for food. I transformed into my panther form.

OH! Did I forget to mention something? As I did before, I am part human. A hybrid, as you may recall I told you in the beginning. I have a full human body, just with parts of a panther. Ears, tail, claws, eyes. All of that on a human body. Not really human, not really animal.

I ran, and ran and ran. Until I could run no more. This felt like the memory I had. I leaned against a large jungle tree...vines were snapped. The weirdest part...

I snapped these vines.

From my great escape, I ran and the vines tangled around my foot. And that's when the tigers came after me. I sighed, "I'll never get out of this god-forsaken jungle!" I cried. Tears welling up in my eyes. But I stayed strong, wiped them away. I kept going.

I just kept walking. It was dusk, I was tired. I found a large tree with a hollowed out space in the front, and curled up, knowing that I was close.

*I am close.*

And after my rather LONG day, I could finally get rest. And that night must have been the first night in a while that I didn't have the dream/memory.

I woke up to the sound of jungle birds. I missed them ringing in my ear. It felt different. But it was still annoying. Like my very own alarm clock. They always seemed to chirp at the same exact time EVERY SINGLE MORNING. Don't even get me started on how annoying it was to wake up and hear

CHIRP. CHIRP. CHIRP.

I disliked it STRONGLY. But I had gotten used to it by now. I got up, and stretched. Every part of me ached with passion.

*I wonder if i'm still the only kid in the jungle.*

I crawled along thick jungle leaves, until I saw it. It was.....

My home.

I was actually home. Not just in the jungle. Back where I belonged, in the jungle tribe.

I roared with joy, as I sprinted down the hill to the tribe. The morning ceremony.

The tribe would gather every morning, to talk about the future. Claw, he was our future predictor. That was his power, and every day he would tell us what would happen. I watched with an eye of evil.

He chanted in his language to summon his power. He gasped, his eyes were a pale white.

"Its her!" He screamed. Carefully lifting a finger, and pointing it at *ME*. Everyone gasped, as a large panther came darting up the grass, the rustling of leaves made my ears twitch. I stood still and didn't move. My face straight.

The panther strutted up to me.

"WHO are you and WHAT do you want?" He ordered, hsi voice was loud, I jumped.

"U-uh, I'm-I mean my name is.." I started, but then thought, that voice sounded familiar, it was almost like I KNEW him.

"Raven." I finished with a sigh. A great amount of breath was lifted off my chest.

The panther's face turned, without warning. His face looked like a mix of happiness and sorrow.

"Is it really you..." He whispered through his heaving breaths.

"Uuummmm do I know you?" I asked, uncertain of what to say because I didn't recognize him other than his voice.

"My Raven." He whispered once more. He hugged me until I could no longer breath.

"Father?" I asked through a choke, puzzled. As he squeezed me tighter, I realized.

*Father.*



“Your’re home!” He laughed. He gripped my paw until I could feel it tingle, then it went numb. He dragged me over to the middle of the circle, as I looked around at the faces staring at me in awe. I could see tears roll down some faces, it made me upset. I sniffled. I looked around, then down. I felt father’s soft furry hand on my back. And then something happened. Another hand appeared, I could feel it. I lifted my head from my wet paws, tear stained.

*Mother.*

“Mother!” I cackled, tangling my arms around her. I let go slowly, and stood up strong.

“Raven” Mother smiled “I have missed you so much!” She also had glassy, little tears creating a river of water streaming down her face. I was confused.

“Missed me?” I asked, muddled. My face tilting to the side with confusion.

“Yes.” They replied at once.

I laughed, it was a strange laugh. Like I wasn’t sure what was going on.

“But i've only been gone for at least two months!” I shouted. My parents gave each other looks of concern. Mother’s eyes went wide, I could see white taking up most of her eyes.

“A couple of months?!” Father bellowed. His face turning to one of anger. His pupils became slits.

“Raven, you’ve been gone for 8 years!” Mother yelled, a tint of disappointment in her voice. I gasped, taken aback. I looked down, thinking.

*8 years.*

Have I lost track of time for that long. Was I under a spell? How old was I now?

I have so many questions! My mind was spinning, faster than I could handle, thinking of everything that had happened since I had left the jungle. I completely forgot that this was all happening in front of the tribe. I had absolutely no idea what to say or do. So I did the first thing I thought of,

“WHAT?!” I screamed, now realizing that that was the obvious thing to do.

“What do you mean, you didn’t know that?” Mother pondered, her voice was high pitched. I answered quickly.

“Wait, then how old am I now?” I quizzed. Mother and father gave each other looks of question. They obviously didn’t know.

“We don’t kn-”

“12.” Father was cut off from a voice in the crowd.

“Who speaks!” He hissed, turning every which way to figure out who spoke.

A young boy stood up, I recognized him.

*Canine.*

My best friend. My only friend. We were born on the same day, just that he is only 42 minutes older. I spent every day of my life with him, until I left.

“Canine!” I yelled, joyfully. A smile slithered across my face as I ran over and gave him the biggest hug.

He smiled and held my shoulders as we stare into each others eyes.

“I missed you Ray...” He whispered in my ear.

After that everyone stood up, I shook a bunch of hands and hugged a lot of other panthers. I knew this is where I belonged. In the jungle, with my tribe.

That very evening, I was crowned leader of the Jungle tribe.

Father placed the crown on my head and I grinned, fiercely.

“It is time, Raven.” He spoke, gently.

I stood over the rock that overlooked all of the jungle and savannah. Every other panther cheered with joy as we watched the sun set. I was happy this way and I was never going to leave. I am fierce. I am sneaky. I am sly. I am strong.

I knew all of this because this is what I have become.

*I rule the Jungle.*

## The Story of Dorman

By .D.J.

Back in the late 1800s, there was a person named Dorman. And NO! Just because his name is pronounced doorman, doesn't mean that he's an actual doorman like the ones at fancy and overpriced hotels. Young Dorman had the miraculous ability to open doors anywhere in the world. Every doctor, scientist, and even carpenters tried to put logic to Dorman's gift, and every explanation got more and more absurd. So absurd that Dorman bought a journal just to fill with hundreds upon hundreds of their ridiculous and nonsensical “Logical theories”.

But there was a reason as to why Dorman had his powers but he never told anyone, mostly because no one would believe him. It all started back at his previous home in Idaho. After dinner, he went for a walk and had stumbled a tad too far and had found himself lost. “Hello?” cried Dorman, “Is anybody there?”

“I'm here.” rasped a hushed voice from the wood.

“Where are you?” stuttered Dorman, “Do you know the way out of the forest?”

“I'm here.” repeated the voice, like a record on replay. “And I can get you back home,” said the voice, now less raspy and more sincere. “But it will come at a price,” the voice suddenly turned stern and serious “So what do you say?”

“W-Wh-What's the price?” Peeped Dorman. “I don't have any money. I come from a relatively poor family. All we are are potato farmers. We'd be able to give you some potatoes if you could come back at harv-”

“NO!” boomed the voice. The fog seemed to have spread away from his chant, at least a little bit. “I don't want your stupid starchy spuds or your pointless mortal profit! I want your soul” teathed the voice.

“My sole?” pondered Dorman. “My shoes aren't that nice.”

“NOT, your shoes, I mean your mortal soul. The very thing that I don't have.”

“But don't I need that? Won't I die without my soul?” reasoned Dorman.

“Oh don't worry about that, once you pay the price **everything** will be better. I get a new soul, you get home with something new, AND as an added bonus, you don't have to die! It's a win-win situation, and you win twice!” encouraged the voice.

The deal seemed perfect to Dorman except for one thing.

“How would I stay alive without my soul?” he asked, “If you say that I won't die then there has to be a reason as to why I won't die.”

“Smart question,” Said the voice, sounding as if it hadn't thought that part through.

“You'll live because I'll replace your soul with an artificial one, I have no use for useless *artificial* souls”

He hissed at that word, artificial as if it pained him to say that word.

“What's the difference between an artificial soul and an authentic soul, their both souls ' so aren't they the sa-” he was about to finish but he was interrupted by the voices wail.

“DON'T! YOU! DARE!” He boomed with such rage that the fog had completely cleared and the force would have blown Dorman away if he hadn't grabbed a withered tree.

“If only it had.” Dorman thought, “then I probably would have been blown back home.”

“There is a BIG difference between artificial and authentic. Would you rather eat roast chicken or reheated meat byproduct sludge made to taste like chicken?” The voice seemed dead set on artificial being bad. “Then it would just be tofu!”

“Alright!” Dorman said, with a fist full of “authentic” courage. “I'll take your offer, but will it hurt?”

“Oh don't worry.” his voice was now sounding calmer, almost, greasy. “You won't feel a thing, or anything else for much longer.”

“WAIT!” screamed Dorman “What do you mean by not feeling anything for much longer?”

But his question was too late. Faster than he could blink a door had materialized out of thin air right in front of him. It looked just like the front door to his house, every crack, every peal of paint, even the faded scribbles from the time he thought it would be a good idea to draw on the door. Then he opened it, and inside he saw his living room, it was the exact same as he had left it. But the empty plates had been put away and everyone must have been in bed because no lights were on. He decided to keep the door a secret

"It's for the best." he murmured to himself, "They wouldn't believe me anyway." and with that, he drifted off to sleep. That morning, Dorman must have slept in because he woke up to his little brother Trip laughing.

"What's got you in such a bubbly mood?" he grunted, still half asleep.

"You're late! You're late!" he cheered.

"Late for what?" he said, now three-quarters of the way there.

"For school!" he yelled "Now get up! You have about ten minutes before school starts!"

But at that point he was fully awake.

"Why didn't you wake me up earlier!" he boomed.

"Because then it wouldn't have been funny!" giggled Trip.

Five minutes later Dorman had gotten prepared for school but it would have taken at least twenty minutes to get to the school house.

"Ten minus five is four, and four minus twenty is two." chuckled Trip. "Better get moving or else you'll be in biiiiig trouble!"

"That isn't correct and you know it." scowled Dorman. Gah it'll be impossible to get to school now, I wish that I could just get the-." But he couldn't finish, because the door had randomly appeared between him and Trip and he fell through it. When he got up he realized that had just fallen through the school front door. He got up, confused yet starting to comprehend what had just happened, he opened the door but all that was there was the inside of the school.

"This is it." he thought, this was the something else, he willed the door to take him to his room and there it was. Trip was lying face down where the door had been, gawking at it as if another door would pop out of the ground.

Dorman closed the door and sped to class but after school he knew he had to tell his parents about his new gift. And that was how he got his powers and the secret spread like wildfire. Soon people from all around the world came and pay just to see him use his powers, and that was how his family became one of the most wealthy and well known families in the world. One day Dorman went for a walk

"Don't come back unless you've got more amazing powers!" his father teased.

Somehow he might have taken a wrong turn and had found his way into a withered forest filled with fog. He was encouraged to call out for the voice, he didn't know why, he just was.

"Hello?" he called "Voice, are you there?" He was just about to chuckle and leave until he got a response.

“Yes?” he heard “Is that you Dorman old chap? It’s been too long how are you? How are you liking my little gift?”

“How did you get here” he shouted “The forest is back in Idaho.”

“I’m as bound to that forest as you are. The fog is my real home” he hushed.

“Wait, the last time we met you said mortal profit, does that mean that your a “

“Yes your suspicions are correct, i’m Boreas, god of fog” he pronounced.

“Okay that clears that up, but why did you give me my powers? Why not someone else, someone braver, stronger, smarter, anything but me.” He sobbed

“Why not you?” he chimed “Who better than someone in need, look at how much it helped you. Your crops were ravaged by locus and your parents could barely feed themselves. And now they have enough to help others in need. Even if your not brave, strong, or smart, your kind ,and that trait is better than the others. Now remember, help others, give to those in need, and keep being kind.”

And with that, the fog cleared revealing a beautiful forest and the end to our story, I hope you enjoyed this short read, and remember to always help those in need.

The Door

“Hey Jean...” Spoke Marco

“What?” Jean replied while the two walked down the streets of the busy town.

“It’s getting pretty dark, we should probably go back home soon.” Marco suggested.

“Its fine, the sun hasn't even set yet.” Jean said while he continued to walk down the road. He took a turn right. “Let’s go this way. A few more minutes won't hurt.” Jean added.

Jean and Marco continued to follow the sidewalk, as the golden sun continued to set over the town, and the fields of flowers and crops that seemed to go on forever in front of them. Jean looked down to see that they had reached the being of the fields. “Jean, we've reached the end of the sidewalk, we should go now. I have homework to do and my mom will be mad if I don't do it.” Marco told Jean.

“Let's go into the fields.” Jean spoke, ignoring what Marco said.

“Did you even hear what I just said...uhh nevermind.” Marco groaned. “Fine, we can go, but it better be quick, the sun has pretty much set, and my phone is about to die. Are you sure this is a good...” Marco’s sentence stopped as he pushed away the corn husks in front of him, and walked straight into Jean. “Ow! Why did you stop?” Marco complained while rubbing his head.

“Look.” Jean said i'm amazement while pointing in front of him. Marco looked up. There was a clearing in the middle of the fields, and in the middle there was a door that seemed to lead to nowhere. There was no house, just the loney door that creaked in the wind. “Isn't that weird? What’s it doing in the middle of this field?” Jean asked.

“A house properly just burned down or something, come on let’s go back now.” Marco told Jean, as he turned around and started to walk back to the street. But Jean began to walk towards the door anyways.

“Look at the frame, it look so old and cool. It almost looks like its glowing too!” Jean said when he got there. The frame of the door was stone, and cracking. It was covered in moss and it had a shield on top. The door itself a dark wood, that was molding and breaking in some places.

“I think it looks kind of creepy.” Said Marco. Jean placed his hand on the cold brass door knob and pushed the door open as it made a loud creaking sound.

“Woah, Marco come look inside.” Jean spoke in awe as he stared into what seemed like endless darkness inside of the door. He stepped inside. “It’s a huge dark room in here!” He exclaimed.

“I bet it’s just your eyes playing tricks on you because of the dark. The sun has already set if you haven't noticed.” Marco replied in disbelief as he rolled his eyes.

“Just come inside!” Jean screamed from inside the door, while shining his phone flashlight around the room.

“Fine, if it will help us leave quicker.” Marco groaned. He stepped through the dark field as the wind brushed the grass against his ankles. Jean reached out his hand.

“Come on!” He said. Marco grabbed onto Jean’s hand and began to step through the doorway. Just as set his foot down, the door slammed shut. Marco let go of Jean’s hand, as the door sliced through his hair, and closed with a slam. His dark brown lock of hair drifted to the ground and Jean was left in complete darkness, with just the faint glow of the door.

Jean rushed over to the door. “HEY MARCO. ARE YOU OKAY?” He yelled. He rattled the doorknob back and forth, but it wouldn’t open. He banged his hands against the door. “HEY MARCO CAN YOU HEAR ME? THE DOOR IS LOCKED!” He screamed. Jean heard no response. Jean continued to push and pull on the door until he was too tired too. He dropped to the floor to catch his breath. “I have to find a way out of here.” He thought. Jean stood up, and began to look around the room. He ran left, and he ran right, until he couldn’t find the door anymore and was trapped in the never ending darkness. “Now I’m in an even worse position.” He worried. Jean kept walking until he saw a faint glow coming from inside the room. He ran towards it. There was an old looking book on a pedestal. “A book?” He thought in confusion. The book had tattered pages, and had a worn down leather cover. The words looked to be in some language her could not recognize. Then the book glowed a bright golden yellow. It looked like something out of a fairytale. Jean looked at it in amazement. “No, a grimoire.” He corrected himself. “But that’s impossible. Those only exist in stories.” He thought. The light grew bigger and turned into thousands of small, bright little flowers and leaves that danced around him. Jean looked at them in awe. “No, I’m getting off task I have to get back to finding a way out of here.” He told himself. He pushed away the flowers and leaves of light, and they shattered into particles of light, that disappeared once they hit the floor, and looked back at the grimoire. “Maybe this can help me.” He thought while reaching out to the magical book. As soon as his fingertips touched the pages, he saw a flash of light and everything began to spin. Then everything went back to normal, but he wasn't in the room anymore.

“What happened?” Jean thought to himself. His head stopped spinning and he looked up. He was standing in thick, brown mud. All around him were tall trees with no leaves, almost like a forest from a horror movie. There was a thick fog in the air, and he couldn't see through it very well. “Eww!” He said in disgust as he pulled his dirty feet out of the mud. “These were my new shoes too.” He said, annoyed. The air smelled musty and he couldn't breathe very well. Jean shook the mud of his sneakers, then wandered the forest, trying to find a way out. He noticed a little shack in the distance and started running to it. “Maybe there's someone there could help me get home.” He hoped.

Jean arrived at the shack and reached out his hand to knock on the door. Dust fell from the door as he knocked. No one answered. "It must be abandoned." He assumed. Jean pushed the door open and brushed away the cobwebs. "Maybe there will be something useful here." The room was filthy, it was covered in dust, and there was broken dishes and glass everywhere. He walked to the back of the house. Then he felt something touch his shoulder. He looked down at his shoulder and saw a hand and jumped. "AHH!" He yelled in fear. He turned around and saw a short figure with a dark cloak on, covering their face.

"Hey...What are you doing in my house?" Mumbled a low, raspy voice.

"Oh... I was... just wondering if you knew how to get to Trost, it's in Japan." Jean spoke nervously.

"Hmm... Trost? Japan? I don't know where that is." The man respond. "But... Maybe this will help." He added. He pulled a long wooden cane out from his cloak, and pointed it behind Jean. Jean turned around to see a blinding, bright light in the middle of the room. Then a ring of light appeared in front of him.

"A portal?" He wondered. "What will this do? Where's this going to take me?" Jean turned around to thank the man. "Thank you..." He began to say, but the man was already gone, like he vanished into thin air. "Weird." He thought before stepping into the portal. The golden light of the portal circled around him as he spun, and spun, and then he was back in the dark room he started in.

"Why am I back here?!" Jean asked himself while standing the darkness. "I thought that man would help me, not make things worse!" He angrily thought. Then, Jean heard something.

"Jean! Jean!" He heard faintly in the distance.

"Marco?" He thought. Jean looked up and tried to find where the voice was coming from. "MARCO! WHERE ARE YOU?" He screamed.

"Jean!" He heard the voice again. Jean kept running towards the voice until he was ran out of breath.

"MAR..." He screamed before he collapsed from exhaustion. He took a few deep breaths.

"I can't get tired now! I have to find Marco." Jean told himself. He regained his breath and stood up to continues running. But in front of him, he saw a large stone frame, with a dark wood, door. There was light seeping through from under it. "The door!" Jean thought in excitement.

"Jean!" The voice screamed again, this time louder than it ever was before, coming from the other side of the door.

"Marco!" Jean yelled once more before grabbed onto the handle of the door. He swung the door open, and stepped out onto the grass of the field, in the dark, windy night.

"Jean!" Marco yelled from the middle of the field, Jean facing his back. Jean ran up the Marco and hugged him. "MARCO!" Jean screamed happily. "Are you okay?" He asked.



“Yeah, I'm fine, the door just cut off a bit of my hair.” Marco replied, while showing him a short piece of hair. “But more importantly where did you go? The door shut then I couldn't find you. Were you in the corn fields?”

“No, I was in the door! There was a dark room, then a book teleported me to a forest!” Jean explained.

“Well, wherever you went, let's go home now.” Marco said.

“Yeah, let's go home.” agreed Jean.

# The Lost King

## Quick Pick By Noah

Bobby took off his cap as a sign of respect. He looked into the tombstone with eyes full of sorrow. With his robe caked in mud, he crouched down and placed down a batch of fresh orchids; her favorite.

With his eyesight blurry with tears, Bobby turned to face the onlookers who watched with disgust.

“What do you want!” Bobby shrieked. They gasped when he looked at them with a raging inferno in his eyes, and they scrambled away. Bobby was tired of these moments repeating themselves, and wanted to go back to the inn he was staying at.

He was stripped from his position, and forced to meander around until he found a place to stay. The Wayward Inn was miles away from her final place of resting, and yet Bobby made the trip to get there everyday. His only desire was to be forgiven, and although that wish cannot be fulfilled, Bobby still felt the need to atone for his sins. Bobby was lucky enough to not be executed, though some days he wish he had been, as he cannot bear the burden of murder. His mind is often swirling in anger, and pure emotion, that he himself has never understood.

She was a gentle soul, a pure hearted woman who's only true wish was to create peace within our nation, and for alliances to be made with bordering lands. Bobby was quite the opposite. His wish was that he crush other lands, and rule over all with an iron fist, with his wife at his side, the ultimate duo. All the while, poor Elizabeth could only watch as Bobby ignited the fire within himself, and seized the chance to rule. Elizabeth tried to make him see the error in his ways, ever so gentle, but Bobby wouldn't be stopped when so much more had to be done.

One night, Elizabeth dared to speak up against Bobby, leaving the whole room in dismay.

“We can't attack our allies!” Elizabeth yelled. That was just the beginning. Since that day, Bobby got more and more vicious, and demanding, while Elizabeth continued to disagree, and they argued into the night. One fateful evening, Bobby had enough, and grabbed a sword from the guards sheath, while the man was

powerless to stop his ruler. Bobby thrust the sword into her heart. Elizabeth dropped from her seat on the throne, inches from the looming door of death. Suddenly Bobby was by her side, the clank of the sword as it hit the floor, vibrating the ground beneath it. With his voice shaky, he cried,

“I want every single nurse in this place right now!” Bobby howled. The guards were unsure whether to pin down Bobby for everyone’s safety, or to do what he said.

“Let’s focus on getting Elizabeth the medical attention she needs!” The captain shouted.

As the nurses rushed in, Bobby was struggling against the guards who were trying to restrain him. When the healers finally got up, they couldn’t look at anyone in the eyes.

“She cannot be healed, and due the the fatal blow, we have determined that she is dead.” The nurses muttered. They were scared because they knew their king well, and understood that he was quick to anger. Even though he was being restrained, they couldn’t help but worry.

The following days there was a heated debate at the high council. Finally it was decided that the king wouldn’t be executed because of his help in previous wars and overall serving time as king, and it was decided he would be forced to live on the street with close to nothing.

Bobby watched as all the people in the street dispersed, and he was the only person outside for miles and miles. Bobby felt a drop of water on his face. He stared up into the dark and starry night sky, filled with awe. Suddenly, Bobby started to cry, and his tears mixed with rain. Bobby screamed into the night, unable to control himself.

“Why would I do it, why?!” Bobby wailed. With his heart torn his two, he dragged himself back to The Wayward Inn, and trudged up the stairs to his room. He didn’t even bother to get dry clothes. Bobby kicked off his boots, and made his way into his bed. He curled into a ball with all the sheets wrapped around him. Slowly, he felt himself losing consciousness, and went into a deep sleep.