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This novel is about a teenage boy named Esko who finds himself in an alternative realm. Specifically on White Dragon Island. He must find his way home but before he does he will need to find a way to unlock the secret powers that lie within him. As he journeys through the Island he will find himself battling Ninjas, Goblins, Wizard, and Gods. What will Esko truly discover on his adventures? What will be revealed to him on this mystical Island? Will he ever return home?

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ESKO'S ADVENTURES

BY

JOHN MUNGIA

*"Never stop growing your MIND,
BODY, and SPIRIT"*

John Mungia

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PREFACE

The adventure has many faces; adventure was the boy Eskoflonie. It was a sprout that had its roots deeply rooted in the life of this teenager. At twelve, when boys of his age played hide and seek and took their time grooming their bodies for the impending visitors of their parents, puberty, Eskoflonie was out into realms, which were hidden from humans, capturing Dixies and fighting trainers. He spent a whole lot of his time outside the planet earth exploring realms and things unknown to man. He discovered in his quest for knowledge of realms unknown, that he had the secret ability to travel to these dimensions.

Nexus, which was the secret realm that had his name boldly written on its palm and it called out to him like a whisper, which traveled with the winds. A dimension concealed from humans, out in the universe revolving in the dark.

Imagine a bubble from a soapy lather that reflects different colors when the sun rays hit it, Nexus was a lot more beautiful than that. It was the central hub of all dimensions, the life source of the Dixies.

The Dixies were fragments of this universe, the energy source of Nexus, their combined energy helped keep Nexus stable.

The Dixies; translucent creatures with tiny wings that hovered in space, possessed a white glowing outer shell. They ranged in different sizes, shapes, and each has a distinct feature. They were more like miniature humans except that they had tails on their posteriors and an antenna attached to their heads. Their ears were like those of an elf and their eyes glowed green. They possessed different abilities and could take on any form when their lives were threatened. They possessed a tremendous amount of energy that if someone were to kill and absorb all their energy, the person would virtually have the control of the Universe.

Eskoflonie battled along with them to ward off the villains. The Dixies and the energy they possessed were not to fall in the wrong hands. Else, the world would be doomed. Eskoflonie journeyed into the wild willfully fighting to protect the Dixies and the Nexus.

As Eskoflonie's journey neared the end, he was in the outermost reaches of the Planet when his spacecraft burned low on fuel. He fidgeted as he thumbed different buttons on the dashboard of his spacecraft. Confusion and fear of the

approaching menace were etched on his forehead. There was a leak in his fuel tank, and this had resulted in an empty tank. The emergency button glowed red to his chagrin.

He cursed, prayed and prayed some more, but his prayers were far from being answered. His tender heart hammered against his chest as his spacecraft spiraled downwards, the inevitable crash mocking whatever entity he had prayed to. He was being drawn by earth's gravitational force. As the spacecraft hurdled towards the planet, Eskoflonie lost consciousness and rode with the tide the spacecraft offered.

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The bright glow of the hospital lights was blinding. He shut his eyes tightly and tried to move but knew something was wrong. He had awoken in a sweat, the blurred scenes of his spacecraft racing towards the earth and the screams of dying from his dreams, fading. His chest hurt like the devil; his head was probably being severed from his body. His neck ached from a sprain; he was in great physical pain. He fluttered his lashes and gradually opened his eyes. A hand was on his shoulder and he could

hear sobs. He tried adjusting, but a jab in the stomach caused him to wince in pain.

His mother smiled sadly when his eyes fluttered open. She found herself groping for words as the tears flowed in torrents. The doctor's arrival put a stop to whatever she wanted to say. He was probably in his thirties; he was young, and he spoke with confidence. He took off the stethoscope that hung loosely on his shoulders as he approached the bed, he placed it on Esko's chest and said some things to the nurse that walked in behind him. She made notes on a book, nodding along to the rhythm of his voice.

"You'd be fine, you're lucky you were brought in early - else, you wouldn't be here".

Eskoflonie knew just how lucky he was to be alive. He had been in a coma for four days. He had four cracked ribs and suffered from a near-fatal sprained neck; most parts of his body were burnt. The spacecraft had gone up in flames when it landed. The bandages bound to his skin made him uncomfortable and they were stained with blood from the cuts he had. He was grateful to have been brought in by a passerby.

His mother held him close, she was most grateful he survived the accident. Her voice trembled as she spoke. She sat on the bed, held his hands in

hers and made him promise to discard his foolish adventures.

"Promise me, promise me Eskoflonie that you won't break this heart again, swear on this bed that you'll never go on this adventure anymore. Listen to the cry of a helpless woman and heed her pleas".

Tears welled up involuntarily as he watched her cry profusely pleading as her life depended on his promise.

He choked on saliva and coughed forcefully as he made to talk. His heart churned watching the woman before him crying her heart out.

"Promise me" she shook him abruptly hurting him some more.

"I promise mom, I cross my heart, I'll put an end to this quest, and I promise not to leave you again," he cried.

"I don't want to lose you," his mother cried as she stroked his face. She held him close and cried on his shoulders giving a deaf ear to his groans. His heart broke from watching his mother sob and he silently swore to do away with his childish quest.

Eskoflonie spent fifteen days in the hospital with thoughts of the Dixies boldly engraved in his

mind. He had made a promise to his mother, but he couldn't keep his thoughts away from the creatures that had given their lives in exchange for his. He was oblivious of what had happened, but he knew it was because of them that he was still alive. He couldn't reconcile his mind with the horror the Dixies had felt burning slowly but kept the will of bringing him to safety. He owed them his life; he would be damned if he didn't repay them of their kindness.

Life returned to normal for Eskoflonie. He could move around alone without his mother serving as a support. He was no longer confined to his bed or a wheelchair, life was coursing through the veins in his legs and for that, he was grateful. He had felt useless all the time he couldn't exercise his freedom of movement.

Under the watchful eyes of his mother, Eskoflonie started living like a normal child. College lay before him, schoolbooks stroked his chin and welcomed him back to their abode. But over the next seven years, unbeknownst to his mother, Eskoflonie found pleasure in the arms of the library and continued to research for information about Ancient Dixies. Gradually, he began to bunk school for the library until he stormed upon a direction to a store in one of the books.

Standing outside the store, he battled with his conscience if he was to proceed. He had promised to stay off his adventures, but fate had a twisted sense of humor.

He felt the rancid wetness of shame climb up his throat as he took the first step in breaking his promise to his mother. He shrugged off the feelings, he was only poking death in the eye for pushing him off a cliff.

He turned the doorknob of the store and let himself in. A man in white apparel sat in a corner of the store. He was unperturbed that someone had walked into the store as he kept scribbling on a paper without taking his eyes off the paper; the store clerk, Eskoflonie thought. He approached the store clerk and asked a question, but the man had his eyes glued to whatever he was writing.

"Excuse me, please. What do you know of the ancient Dixies?" Eskoflonie asked again.

The clerk remained silent with a frown creasing his brows. Eskoflonie asked again, but this time in a commanding tone.

"Are you deaf? What do you know about Ancient Dixies?"

The clerk smiled, looked up at him and replied, "You will soon find out!"

Eskoflonie was taken aback by the way the clerk replied to him. His tone wasn't friendly as well, but he wasn't going to be deterred by it. He turned to face the clerk, but his eyes caught a glimpse of a strange object glowing brightly on the counter behind the clerk. Without an invitation, Eskoflonie reached for the object with a look of mixed emotions on his face. The object was bound to a tiny chain; it was a Wadjet eye.

Once the glowing object was in his hand, he had visions that were hard to explain. He discovered that the clerk happened to be a former trainer himself. He saw the Ancient World of Dixies where this former trainer had caught every known kind of Dixie. Eskoflonie drifted back into reality, replaced the object on the counter from where he had taken it, and raced out of the store in fear.

When he was certain that the store was out of sight, he stopped to catch his breath and ponder over what he had witnessed. He realized he knew how to get to the Ancient World of Dixies. The Wadjet eye had awoken his adventurous spirit and it had revealed routes, which he could travel to the get to the ancient world of the Dixies.

He followed his instincts and the directions he had seen in one of his visions and found himself at a teleport. All he wanted to do was return to the realm, Nexus. He was certain that the Dixies were the ones that saved his life and a show of appreciation wouldn't hurt anyone. He was breaking his promise for a good course.

The thought of losing his Dixies hurt, and even though he could never speak directly to his Dixies as they were all dead and transformed into tiny specs floating around the Nexus until, at a later time - when they would be reincarnated, he could still communicate with the living ones who would convey his message through the Nexus Soul as it resides in them all.

Upon entering the teleport, he was transported to a different world; the Ancient Dixie World themed from the Aztec civilization. The people there were very brutal with their Dixies. They killed and forcefully absorbed the energy of the Dixies there. If the Dixies were reluctant to fight, they tortured them and eventually sacrificed them. Eskoflonie was enraged seeing the torture the Dixies went through, so he challenged these people to a battle. The grandmaster of the tribe produced their strongest man; Duga and promised to let go of the Dixies if Eskoflonie could defeat him.

Duga had a tough build, he towered inches above Eskoflonie, he looked terrifying. Eskoflonie was certain he would lose the fight, but he had to try. Duga charged at him as the people chanted their war cry. Eskoflonie evaded his punch but came sprawling to the ground when he missed a step. This gave Duga the advantage he needed. He carried Eskoflonie and flung him across the arena. He marched menacingly towards Eskoflonie and gripped him by his neck. He would have snapped his neck had Eskoflonie not kicked him in the groin.

Duga dropped him like one who had been pricked by a needle as he nursed his aching groin. Eskoflonie pounced on him like a cat on an unsuspecting mouse and began a vicious pounding spree. He grabbed Duga's head and jammed his kneecap to it. The gash on Duga's forehead spewed with blood. Duga fell to the ground as the blood dripped to the floor staining it red. Eskoflonie wasn't about giving up, he launched himself at Duga, but Duga grabbed him by his feet and flung him across the arena. Cringing, he rose towards Eskoflonie on the ground, he jabbed his knuckles into his ribs and this, in turn, brought the pains he had felt while in the hospital.

Durga hit him some more and slammed his fist on his face. A couple more punches and blood splattered over his face; his nose was broken. He arose in pain, grabbed Durga by his arms, but Durga punched him in the face forcefully. He lost a tooth as the blood flowed from his lips. One by one, he lost control of his limbs until he slumped and lost consciousness. Durga wasn't done with him, he wanted to sever his limbs, but was stopped by the grandmaster. Eskoflonie wouldn't go to waste, the tribe needed more slaves.

The people captured Eskoflonie and enslaved him. He was taken to an enclosed room, which served as their prison house. He was hauled into the darkroom and was tortured. He was forced to labor for the town. Days passed as he sought ways of escape, and eventually stared freedom in the face when he found a loophole in the town's security. He escaped from his prison and fled.

He battled more trainers and was able to gain the trust of a rouge Dixie and together, they became Trainer and Dixie Fighter. But as quick as this new adventure began, it ended. It ended because the Dixies were all-absorbing back into the Nexus by an unknown force and their energy was released into the Universe. This energy

spread through the universe and was acquired by a lot of people. This energy gave people extraordinary powers and abilities to mete out signature attacks on opposing assailants. It fell to the wrong hands too and they wanted more. They sought ways of acquiring all the energy of the Dixies, so they could dominate the universe.

What seemed like days was, in fact, many years. When Eskoflonie returned to Earth, he was forty-two years old. He decided it was time he looked a little into his future. He wasn't getting any younger, even though he fought to keep the Dixies safe, he still had a life ahead on planet earth.

For the next twenty years, he stayed at home fixing things he has left fallow and then, he met his heartthrob, Rosey. She was everything he needed. Although she felt sad most times when he had to leave for space, she was grateful he was always there for her. When the time came, he married Rosey and they lived together, happily.

A year after they had walked down the aisle, his life seemed to fall apart as he spent most of his time on a hospital bed. He somehow found himself infected with the Black Cell Virus (A rare virus that comes from Reapers Realm). Rosey was scared she was going to lose him.

One night, he had a heart attack on his way to the hospital. His wife Rosey, had announced she was with child and in all the excitement, his heart raced, and he passed out. Rosey was heartbroken, just when she needed him with her, he bailed on her.

Days rolled into months and one morning, the shrill cry of two children rent the air. Rosey had put to bed; twins. She called them, Esko and Rose.

Esko reminded her of her late husband, he was his doppelganger, a younger version of his father. He loved adventures just like his father did and this caused his mother pain. Esko flonie was rarely home when he was alive, and whenever he was home, he spent most of his time in his study or the library. Rosey prayed Esko would not ply the path his father had carved. If wishes were horses...

As the years passed by, Esko grew curious about his father and asked his mother of his father; what he was like?

"What did my father do?"

His mother told him the story of his father.

This was a moment she dreaded, one she earnestly prayed wouldn't be. She heaved a sigh,

looked him over, drew him close to her and began, "Just like you, your father loved adventure, he explored worlds unknown to man, he was a warrior who fought many trainers". She went on about Eskoflonie, she smiled most of the time as she poured out the memories she had of her husband to her son. But her countenance swerved off the happy road when she started talking about his demise.

"He had a heart attack - brought on by a virus called Black Cells just when I had announced to him that I was with his child," she broke down in tears.

Esko gathered her up in his arms promising her all would be well.

She wiped her tears with the back of her palms, blew her nose with the ends of her skirt and went up to the attic. She brought down a dusty old trunk box.

"You will find what you are looking for here. The time has come for you to finish your father's legacy."

Esko stared at the trunk box, his father had a lot of stuff in the box. He wondered how his father had felt fighting alongside the Dixies. He

wondered if the Dixies were still in existence. He doubted they were still alive, but he was certain their energy still lingered in the universe to be absorbed by anyone with the ability to use those energies. But there were still several realms with Dixies in them. He had to continue with the quest his father couldn't finish, he needed the Dixies and their energy to defeat the villains that lay ahead and to restore balance in Nexus and the universe.

Chapter 1

Inscriptions

The trunk box before him lay lazily with eerie inscriptions all over it. He couldn't make out what the inscriptions meant and wondered what basked in the comforts of the box. The inscriptions ranged from tiny ones to bold ones and there were strange drawings of things he had never seen before.

The dust that had settled on the box did a good job in concealing most of these drawings and inscriptions and would probably make a handful of sand. He blew off the dust, which spread its particles over the room. He tried warding off the lost ones that had found their way towards him, but they persisted as they went for his nostrils. The dust particles were sent off immediately as they had come by Esko's sneeze.

After they had found comfort in different corners of his room, he took another look at the trunk box and noticed a strange drawing on the top of the box. It was the biggest drawing on the body of the trunk box; a white dragon with raging flames leaving the confines of its mouth, ready to devour anything that stood in its way.

His curiosity was piqued and it's a stench, intoxicating. He had been caught in its web as he relentlessly fiddled with the lock of the old trunk box that wouldn't budge. He cursed under his breath. The last thing he needed now was futility looking him in the face.

He tried a couple more times with beads of sweat sliding down his body and was finally rewarded with success.

Relief tasted sweet.

Esko never knew his father had so many Dixie items. He rummaged through the items, and there he found amulets and journals of various sizes in the box. One of the journals caught his attention, the largest of them all; wrapped in a black cloth, brown pages and weighed like a thousand tons. He flipped through the pages of the journal, the words were written in red ink and he wondered how long it had taken his father to put down the words in the journal. Some were written in English and others, a bizarre language. There were sketches of strange things and beings within those pages as well.

He glanced through the pages more before he felt an impending headache. He thought it is best to take a break, stroll through the streets of the town and let everything sink in.

Minutes later, he exited the house to enable him to process his emotions and ponder over all he had seen. He was so excited that he started to skip along the sidewalk. He had taken a long stride towards the outskirts of town when something came to Esko's attention, he noticed an old house, just out of town. It was made of brown wood, which looked old and riddled with white molds. The roof looked like it would cave in and leave the house bare. An inscription on the door was an exact replica of one on the trunk box. His imaginations were probably playing pranks on him - he thought. He was eager to go into the house, he needed to find the connection between the house and the trunk box.

He carefully approached the house and knocked on the door, but nobody answered. He rapped on the door one more time and was met with the same deafening silence. He turned the knob as the hinges creaked and gave way. He pushed the creaky door and walked in. Once inside, he called out to any inhabitant of the house.

"Hello?"

"Anyone in here?"

He walked around a little and noticed that it was an old store. The shelves in the store still stood in place, they were empty, the room looked

better on the inside than it did on the outside. The walls were without the molds on the outside.

His skin tensed and every hair on his body stood on end when the voice of a man broke the silence.

"Welcome." He said.

He darted a glance in the direction from where the voice came. A man was sitting next to the fireplace. He wore a white shirt over white pants; the store clerk, his instincts chipped in. "Come have a seat, Esko," the clerk said. Esko looked at him curiously. He was startled for a while wondering how the man before him knew his name. "How do you know my name?" The clerk looked up at him. "I have known you for quite some time. You look just like your father." He flicked off some brown dirt from his palm and continued. "Did you know that I trained your father one time? I actually showed him how to get to the Ancient Dixies World." Esko realized the clerk had trained his father about three decades ago. He recognized him as the clerk whom his father had described as his trainer in the big journal. He wondered why he still hadn't aged a day. The clerk stood up, walked around Esko a few times and finally let his hands rest on

Esko's shoulder. "You know about your father's quest, I suppose?" He asked.

Esko wasn't sure if it was a rhetorical question or he expected an answer, but he nodded anyway. The clerk went on to narrate the quest his father couldn't finish and how the responsibility of completing the adventure was Esko's now.

"This adventure needs a little spice," he finally said with excitement after he was done laying bare his father's adventure.

The store clerk walked into a dark corner, grabbed a wooden box and pulled out a chain from it. The chain, long and glistening, had an object at the end of it. It was a Wadjet eye. The store clerk gave the chain to Esko and then kicked him out. "Continue the adventure!" he said to him. As Esko went out of the store, he couldn't understand what had just transpired between him and the clerk. He stared down at the chain that laid in his hand unable to understand what it was used for.

Suddenly, a gust of wind blew past him raising sand particles along its way. He lifted his hands to shield his eyes from the assault of the sand. When he turned to look in the direction of the old store after the turbulence had settled, it was no longer there, the store had vanished into thin

air. He was scared to the bones as he ran. Esko wondered to himself; if the chain was part of his adventure or was it just a piece of junk? He continued and found himself in a small town called Ammit. The first thing Esko saw in the town was the library, which stood magnificently, so he went inside.

The library was larger than any building He had seen in the town, stacked with a great number of books on wooden shelves. He noticed that there was no one in the library; the library seemed empty. He decided to leave and just as he was about to do that, he heard a door being unlatched in the corner and a young librarian girl came through it and asked him to wait. The girl looked surprised seeing Esko and then told him people rarely came around the library. She asked Esko the books he wanted, but he had none in mind. So, she urged him to take a look around the library.

Esko didn't know the girl that stood before him, neither had he seen her before. She was a sculpture of perfection; eyes that lit up with excitement when she spoke, a nose which fit perfectly to the oval face, perfect dentition that shone when she smiled.

"Hello?" She interrupted his thoughts. "Do you mind closing your mouth for a while?"

Shame washed over him. He had left his mouth wide open and had been staring rudely. As courtesy demanded, he asked for her name.

"What's your name?"

"My name is Crystal," she said.

"What's yours?"

"Esko" he replied.

"What brings you to the library?" Crystal asked.

Esko discussed in detail with Crystal about the adventure, which he was embarking on - not leaving out the trunk box and the old store encounter with the clerk. Esko told Crystal everything she needed to know about his adventure and she was surprised to hear the whole story. "Can I join you on your adventure?" she asked him with excitement etched in her eyes. Esko looked at her wondering why she wanted to embark on such an adventure with a stranger, but finally answered, "Why not? It's okay with me." He could use a company. They were both excited about the adventure ahead.

Crystal suggested to Esko to take a look round the library and pick out the books he found useful while she got something from the room in the corner.

The library was filled with so many books: ancient ones and modern literature, books on magic and sorcery, sports and cooking. Esko continued to look and flip through the pages of different books, moving from one shelf to the other with glee plastered over his face until a small light caught the side of his eye. It was yellow and seemed to call to him. He thought it was a shiny substance that glistened when the rays of the sun that made their way into the library fell on it.

Esko slowly walked towards the light and discovered that it was from an old golden book. He also realized that the book had the same symbol as the one on his chain. The book was connected with his adventure he thought to himself. Hurriedly, he took the book out of its shelf, opened it and read a sentence, "The one who opens this book shall be cursed or blessed - deciding their choices in life." Esko was confused, but he kept on reading what appeared to be a different language it read, "Quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius, et quod est superius est sicut quod est inferius, ad perpetranda miracula rei unius." Immediately Esko read that sentence, a bird cackled in the distance. A tremor spread across the library sending books cowering in fear as they sought refuge out of their shelves. Esko held onto a shelf

but cried from the darkest depths of fear as the golden book, which appeared to have a hole dug in it opened wide and began to pull him in and everything else in the surrounding area with him. Esko cried out for Crystal and when she came, Esko's body was already halfway into the book. Crystal, in fear, approached the golden book, braced her hands against the table the book laid, and reached out her hand to Esko. He struggled and stretched and finally grabbed it. Crystal began to pull him out with all her might, but all of a sudden, a strong force pulled them in as the sound of their screams drowned with them. The golden book closed with a thud and the light dimmed out.

Chapter 2

Scary

Esko and Crystal were both knocked out for a little while. They had been transported to an unknown place. A buff man came along and kicked both of them, he grunted and sniffed at them. They were both dazed and unaware of where they were. The pounding in their head was killing. It was definitely going to deafen them.

Esko made to stand to his feet, but he staggered backward and bumped into Crystal who sat confused rummaging through her thoughts; trying to find out what happened and where they were.

The man had a tough build, which was menacing and his facial scars, scary. His lips appeared broken and swollen. The folds on his head could squeeze one in if you crossed their paths. He exuded jungle power and smiled like the confident controller of the town they had fallen into.

The man told Esko to fight him but met Esko's cold and confused stare.

The buff man bellowed this time and louder, "Fight me!"

Esko was perplexed. He found his bearing and stood. He gave Crystal a hand and helped her up.

"A fight for what?"

Esko's question pumped oxygen into the man's flaming anger.

The man grunted at him. "Don't play games with me, boy. If you don't want to fight me then get off my yard." Esko and Crystal looked at each other in bewilderment wondering what kind of a person challenged you for a duel because you were in his yard. They both got off the yard and walked into the streets.

The street was not empty, but the people who were walking along it were not speaking as though an intruder was amongst them. Esko and Crystal hastened their steps, they bowed their heads to avoid being noticed and started walking until they bumped into another man who stopped them. He stood in their way - halting them.

"Who are you?" the man asked and looked them over. "I don't think I have ever seen you before. What's your mission here? Where are you

from?" he questioned in succession not giving the chance for an answer.

He stared at them menacingly expecting an immediate response.

The man wasn't as muscular as the first one they had encountered. He wasn't fierce-looking as well, he was more receptive than the buff man, at least, he wasn't asking for a fight.

Esko spoke first. "My name is Esko and this is Crystal", he pointed at Crystal. "What's yours?"

"I am Jack," the man answered. "I happen to be the town's guardsman."

Esko, Crystal, and Jack talked for a while with Esko enquiring where they were. He narrated their ordeal and asked for directions on how to get back to Ammit.

Jack spotted three ninjas coming towards them. They were dressed in black attires with belts of different colors accentuating their attire.

"Come into my house before they see you," Jack said hurriedly and led the way. They all went into the house: a nice looking, spacious, wooden construction that was dimly lit. Jack beckoned on them to sit on the couch, which they gladly did. He offered them water to drink, they drank as

though they had been dehydrated during their spiral journey down the unknown town.

"Who were those guys?" Crystal asked Jack.

"They are the Trio Gang," Jack replied as he threw some wood he had gathered earlier into the dying flame of the fireplace. "They always come here to fight people who stand in their way. No one has ever defeated them except for one man who can confidently beat them; Morfius. You probably bumped into him on your arrival here. No one gets into this town without his radar picking it up. He's the one that kicked you, he probably thought you were helping the Trio Gang." "The Trio Gang are a powerful lot; they have different colored belts to show how strong they are: two white belts and one yellow belt. The white belt stands for level one and the yellow, level two. Morfius, on the other hand, is on level three; he has an orange belt. Well, I would say that's all you need to know."

"No, it isn't," Crystal said. "Where are we?"

"Oh," Jack responded, "Welcome to White Dragon Island."

"White Dragon?" Esko questioned.

Jack answered him in the affirmative. Esko remembered the trunk box at home, it had the drawing of a white dragon.

Were they connected in any way? Did his father visit this town? Was this part of the adventure? These questions came flooding, but who would answer them?

Hours later after their conversation, Jack walked up to them and said, "Why don't you both spend the night here? Darkness is upon us already, tomorrow, you can probably continue your journey."

"Sounds good," Esko and Crystal said in unison.

"I'll show you to your rooms."

Jack walked to a door that led to the inner rooms while they followed him. He let them sleep in separate rooms.

"I'll see you both in the morning. I have to get to work now."

Minutes later, the front door was shut and Esko and Crystal were left all alone. It was strange, this new world, strung with people who swam in fights like it was an ocean. They looked unwelcoming, well, except for Jack. Esko bade Crystal goodnight and walked into his room. He was surprised to see how big the room was.

There was a small bookshelf, white with black slashes, in the corner of the room. Esko walked up to it and selected a book to read before going to bed. Crystal was already sound asleep and dreaming of her father who happened to be a Dixie Trainer himself. Her father had been a very powerful fighter bringing his enemies to their knees, but he was killed by a much stronger opponent named Anubus. Anubus had used the deadly Energy Force Ball to kill Crystal's father. The blast had paralyzed him, and he had suffered before death finally overtook him. His death was gruesome.

Back in Esko's room, he was sound asleep until he suddenly felt hot and an intense ache pounded in his head. He sat up on the bed for a while hoping the headache would go away, but it persisted. He got up from the bed to grab a glass of water in the kitchen but fell on his face. The chain around his neck—the one with the Wadjet eye—glowed with blue fire. The flame was soothing and gradually spreading all over Esko and soon, he too started to glow in blue.

Then, the pain started. It felt as if he had been bitten on the chest by an insect, which sent the pain through his body. His body was engulfed by flames, licking off the very essence of his flesh. Just as soon as it started, he burst into flames.

The fire turned blue and covered him, so he yelled for help, but there was no answer. He stood up and walked with difficulty to the door, but the pain became so overwhelming that he fell to the ground again, his breathing became heavy, the room spinning uncontrollably and then, he passed out.

Chapter 3

The Dawn

With the break of dawn, Jack came over and woke Esko and Crystal. He tapped on their doors, peeked in and motioned them to come down to the kitchen for breakfast.

Esko didn't feel well, he felt light-headed. He struggled to keep his balance as he walked to the kitchen. Crystal sluggishly strode to the kitchen with hunger tearing her inside apart.

When they had settled in, Esko kept sighing successively like he had something on his shoulders.

"How did you sleep?" Jack asked them both.

"Not so well, I had the strangest dream", Crystal replied giving her neck a little squeeze.

Jack turned to Esko expecting an answer. Esko shook his head unsure of what to say. When he finally spoke, his voice sounded like it came from a distance. Jack and Crystal couldn't make out what he was saying. Suddenly, he began to cough violently. Crystal grabbed a glass of water

on the table and handed it to Esko, he gobbled the contents down.

Jack strode to a corner in the kitchen, rummaged through a shelf and produced some capsules. He handed Esko the capsules and another glass of water to drink. He scrunched his nose in a bid to steer off the smell of the capsules he had. After swallowing the pill, which he had done with difficulty, Esko felt better; a lot better than the previous night. "What are these capsules?" Esko asked. "They're only painkillers," Jack answered. He rubbed his palms together and looked at both of them. He served them breakfast - for which they were grateful.

"Esko doesn't feel very well, I'd suggest you spend a little time here before continuing your journey".

"It wouldn't hurt spending some time here While Esko gets back his strength," Crystal chipped in.

"While you're still here, you could explore our town". It wasn't a bad idea after all.

"Are both of you ready to explore the town?"

"Yes!" They screamed in excitement.

The first place he took them to was a dojo. The school was large enough to accommodate his whole village, Esko thought. Students trooped in

and out of the dojo with their immaculate white attire. Most of them chattering excitedly. Crystal smiled broadly; she had never been to a dojo before. She admired the students and tried mimicking most of the moves they made.

"Why don't you two take a look around while I go talk to the manager of this dojo?" Jack encouraged.

With that, Jack went to the office, leaving Esko and Crystal to look around.

In the office, Jack was telling the Dojo Master that Esko might be - the Chosen One.

"Ah, my friend, what brings you here this early?"

"I think I've found him."

"Found who?"

"The chosen one".

His instincts never lied, he felt it in his gut. But the Dojo Master shadowing in the corner said, "What if he's not? What would happen to the real Chosen One?"

Jack shrugged "We have to take that chance. I say we give him a challenge."

The dojo master mumbled for a while, it wouldn't be a bad idea, he decided. He urged

Jack to bring Esko along with doubt boldly written in his eyes. Jack went out of the office and called Esko and Crystal to come to him.

"Esko would you be interested in a challenge?" Jack asked.

"What kind of challenge?"

"A fight"

"Yeah, of course," Esko replied.

"Excellent," said the Dojo Master.

Fear crept up Crystal's throat sucking up all the moist she had. She was going to say something, but the dojo master's voice stopped her.

"So your opponent is Marcus." "MARCUS!" Shouted Jack. Marcus wasn't the right opponent. He would beat Esko to a pulp. The dojo master should have picked someone else.

A young, tough built focused fighter came over. "Yes, sir." Standing tall. "This will be your opponent," Jack said. "His name is Esko, go easy on him." "Don't worry," Marcus said with a smirk while he rubbed his palms together.

"I won't hurt him." "The fight will be in this circle," Jack said pointing to a fighting ring. Getting into the circle, Marcus jumped around

and laughed wickedly. When Esko stepped into the circle, he raised his hands to fight, but Marcus was faster. He moved with speed and kicked him in the face, cracking his jaw and his lips. Blood trickled down his face finally resting on his shirt and staining them. He wiped his lips with the back of his palms.

Marcus smiled at him and made another move on him. Esko misjudged his next move and ended up being hit on the nose. Esko fell to the ground, his nose bleeding. While Esko was on the ground, Marcus came over and started to kick him around. Seconds later, Jack instructed Marcus to stop. Marcus left the circle to join the other fighter. Crystal came to Esko.

"Are you okay?" She tried helping him up, but he was too weak to move a muscle. He winced in pain. She was mad at Jack for putting Esko through that ordeal, he was well aware he wasn't fine in the morning, she was also mad at Esko for accepting the challenge. Esko couldn't say anything because his mouth and nose were bleeding. His joints ached from all the assault he received from Marcus, he was badly bruised. Jack came over with a damp towel, threw it at Esko and told him to clean himself with it.

Crystal seized the towel from him and offered to help. Jack took Esko and Crystal to his house and

told Esko to take a nap. When Esko went to sleep on the couch, Crystal and Jack had a long conversation and within the conversation, Crystal said to Jack, "You knew he wasn't going to win the fight. Didn't you?" "You knew how weak he was in the morning yet, you thought it is best to throw him in harm's way", she ended with a frown. "Well, after all this time I thought Esko was the Chosen One," Jack said, depressed. "But I guess I was wrong again." "Chosen One?" Crystal asked, confused. "What do you mean the Chosen One?" Jack sighed, stood up from the couch and said with a yawn, "It's very late, how about I'll tell you both in the morning." So Crystal went to bed thinking to her, "The Chosen One? What does he mean the Chosen One?" Minutes later, she fell asleep.

Chapter 4

The Wizard

In the morning, Esko woke up and headed for the kitchen. He'd heard someone singing. He arrived at the kitchen and found Jack singing and dancing while preparing breakfast. "Ahh, Esko," Jack said, "Why don't you sit down so I can serve you breakfast?" Esko sat down.

"You seem so elated this morning"

"I'm always this way"

"You'll have to teach me these dance moves"

Jack let out a throaty laugh, "Why not."

A moment later, Crystal came in rubbing her eyes with the back of her palm. "Mmmmm, she inhaled deeply, what do we have here?" She announced she was hungry and she could smell something good.

"Look who finally decided to show up", Esko blurted out.

"I was awake long into the night keeping watch over you", she replied with a smirk and they all laughed. So she sat down to join Esko for

breakfast. Jack was making pancakes, its aroma stimulating their salivary glands.

"Who wants one pancake loaded with all the goods?" Jack asked.

They are in silence until Crystal spaced out and remembered Jack saying something about 'One'. That's when it hit her. She remembered talking to Jack about the 'Chosen One'. So, she asked Jack to tell the story. At first, he hesitated, but he knew someday he would have to tell them the story. His eyes narrowed to slits as he began, "The story of the Chosen One."

Long ago, a man; a wizard was a definition of vicious, he nibbled on evil like it was all he needed to survive. He was feared. Trepidation reigned supreme where his footsteps threaded. The people of the town dreaded him because of his love for harming people. He was more powerful than anyone in the village except one man; a great man who could withstand and beat the infamous wizard.

The wizard was the originator of the ninja's, he recruited all the ninjas who reside here today. The wizard wanted White Dragon Island for himself, which is why he proceeded in creating an army of ninjas. His covetousness got the better part of him, so he commanded all the

ninjas to locate and destroy all buildings and people on the island.

The ninja's carried out their master's bidding as the leveled humans, animals, buildings and everything that challenged them.

Unfortunately, one man stood in their way, he was unrelenting in defending the island. He fought to his teeth defeating the ninjas. A squad of the surviving ninjas who weren't let off without bruises returned to the wizard and recounted their ordeal. They informed him of a greater and more powerful man than the wizard himself. They narrated how this man had singlehandedly killed several other squads of ninjas with his kinetic energy.

The wizard was furious, he growled in annoyance threatening to rain brimstones on this man who had challenged him. His volcanic anger was about to erupt. He desperately wanted to meet this person, so he traveled out of his massive palace and into the woods until he came upon the man in person. They were both face to face.

"You dare challenge my authority?"

"You have no place here, you would never have dragon island", the man fired back.

That statement seemed to have infuriated the wizard and rocked the very foundations of his anger. That's when the wizard gathered up an energy ball and threw it at the man. The man caught it and threw it back to the wizard. The wizard got hit by it and the force tossed him back, he staggered backward hitting and breaking trees.

When the wizard got up from the ground, he looked up in a bid to locate his opponent, but the man jumped on him from behind and kicked him. The power of the kick sent the wizard flying backward. The man was about to kick the wizard again, but a big earthquake trembled the grounds and a massive hurricane developed overhead and sucked both of them up and they were never seen again. The people of the island still believe the wizard is out there because sometimes there are appearances of different ninjas nobody has ever seen before. So that's the reason why we've been looking for one certain person like the man who almost killed the wizard and I thought it was you Esko, but I guess I was wrong," Jack finished with disappointment on his face.

Esko got mad and left the house; Crystal followed him. While Esko walked around town he saw a ninja. He wasn't scared of what the

ninja could do to him. He marched past the ninja without fear of being harmed. The ninja looked at him with confusion. The whole town trembled at their sight. The people cowered in fear at their mere sight, who then was Esko to have boldly walked past him. Crystal called out to him to stop, but he was at a point where nothing mattered anymore. Esko kept on walking into a nearby field of trees.

Crystal caught up with him and held his hands while they walked deeper into the field.

They both noticed the big blue ocean that was past the trees. Esko sat with Crystal on the warm sand and looked at the ocean waves. They were both relaxing until the Trio Gang stopped by. They frightened the duo who thought they were all alone. Esko immediately recognized them as the trio gang. Esko wondered what the trio gang wanted from them. He smiled at them throwing his courteousness at them. But they tossed it back at him and started to kick him. Esko was addled, he tried to defend himself, but the gang was stronger.

Without much ado, Crystal ran into the fields of trees, heading back to town, and screaming her lungs out as she called out to Jack for help. Esko was still getting kicked around until suddenly, the Wadjet Eye started to glow. The glow started

as a tiny spark, but gradually, it turned into a large ball of glow. The Trio stopped, addled by the event unfolding before them. They stood motionless as they tried to fathom what was happening. The glow slowly engulfed Esko like an inferno and he started to glow. He was left confused and thrown into unconsciousness. He spasmed for a moment before his eyes shot open.

His eyes spelled out anger as he yelled at the Trio Gang. They tried to run from him but were held in place by an unknown force. He swiftly went up to them like he had an unseen skate. One by one, he punched, kicked and tossed them around. He screamed as he assaulted them. He possessed the strength of a thousand men. He tossed them about like they were chaffing before the wind, he was the wind and they were chaffing. With broken jaws and bones, they escaped Esko's outrage and ran for their lives promising him to return prepared for a fight.

At that moment, Esko felt weak when the glow dimmed out, so he collapsed and laid on the ground, staring at the sky. Crystal and Jack rushed to him. Jack had a backpack of first-aid medical supplies. Jack knew that Esko had defeated the Trio Gang because they never leave an opponent alive. He wondered how he was

able to solely defeat the trio but then, he pondered why he couldn't defeat Marcus. Jack told himself, it was possible to grow strength rapidly and not notice it if he was the Chosen One.

He administered an ointment on Esko. The ointment was to soothe him and relieve him of the injuries inflicted on him.

Jack pulled out a small device from the backpack that looked like a computer and scanned Esko with it. The device revealed one's training level.

"You're on a level two," Jack said.

Crystal had been silent the whole time trying to decipher what had transpired between Esko and the Trio.

"How did Esko skip a level and how could he beat all three of them?" She asked.

Well, it didn't really matter to her as long as Esko was fine. Esko was weak from all that had happened; Jack picked him up on his shoulders and carried him back to his house.

He laid Esko on the couch and let him rest for a while. A few minutes later, Esko felt all right. He thanked Jack for his kindness and promised to repay him someday. Jack served them dinner. He

offered Esko pain killer capsules, which he gulped down.

After they had their fill of the food, they all stayed in the dining room talking to each other for hours.

"What happened out there?" Crystal asked

"I don't know, all I remember is a mysterious glow"

Crystal shrugged unsure of what next to say.

Jack told them a story about a Great Warrior who would fight massive reptiles to gain himself a higher level. The death of the reptiles aided in his elevation. He absorbed the essence of the reptiles he killed. The warrior would kill the reptiles, so he would achieve his maximum level. He would go in search of reptiles and when he found them, he went for their head first. He would then go ahead to smear the reptilian blood on his body before he consumed them. He not only had the ability to absorb a reptile's energy, but he could also Sap a man of his strength if he defeated him. He had never lost a battle.

The villagers feared him because of his weird behavior. Some say it is only a legend that possesses such attributes. People believe that he

still roams the island searching for the strongest fighters to absorb their energy so he can become even stronger.

Jack finished the story of the great warrior, wrapping it up with hope; hope that the great warrior would appear someday and put an end to the ninjas.

Minutes later, Jack suggested they all went to bed. Esko stood up from the couch, Crystal followed suit. They bade Jack a goodnight and went into their rooms.

Esko limped to his room.

"You'd get better in the morning", Jack called out.

Esko laid in bed reminiscing on the events of the day, he thought of the Wadjet eye that glowed. He stroked the chain that laid comfortably on his neck - mouthing a thank you.

Back in Crystal's room, she pondered on how Esko had defeated the ninjas on his own. She conjured up images that could suit the description of the great warrior.

Jack laid awake, his thoughts swimming from Esko to the great warrior. He hoped Esko was the Chosen one they had all been anxiously

expecting. Eventually, they all fell asleep and dreamed about the great warrior.

Chapter 5

The Strangest Dream

Crystal jolted awake. She was adorned in beads of sweat. She had the strangest dream; the ninjas had attacked her and would have killed her except for the timely intervention of the great warrior. He charged at them like a relentless murderer, he went head-on with them. He unleashed his wrath on them sapping them of their existence, it was then; reality crept its way in. She went to the kitchen to get a drink to calm her nerves but stumbled upon the silhouette of a man in the living room. She screamed in fright. The man looked her way; it was Jack.

She was grateful it was him. He had a questioning look on him as to why she screamed. She approached him and discovered he had a piece of paper in his hands.

"What are you reading?" she asked.

"A letter, it's a letter from a man I know. He lives south from here. He sent me a letter saying he wants me to go over there. So, that means I have to kick both of you out for a while." Jack answered.

Esko eavesdropped on them. He had almost jumped out of his skin when Crystal's scream pierced the break of dawn. He stealthy came down to the kitchen to send the intruder on a journey of no return but was met with whispers. He overheard everything they talked about while he was coming down the stairs, but he was all right with that.

Crystal was sad Jack had to leave, sadder they would be left homeless, roaming the unknown streets of the White Dragon island with ninjas looking for a prey to pounce on.

They had breakfast; and minutes later, Esko, Crystal, and Jack were out the door. While Jack went south, Esko and Crystal went North. Esko and Crystal were talking to each other, Crystal narrated her dreams to Esko. She was frightened of the ninjas that attacked them the previous day would show up again. Esko assured her nothing of such would happen and if it did, he was prepared to devour the ninjas.

A white belted ninja was ahead of them, they hastened their footsteps in order to catch up with him. Esko approached him and said, "You will challenge me." The Ninja was surprised, no one ever challenges them to a duel let alone, someone who hadn't attained any level. He accepted the challenge, he was confident he

would defeat him because he didn't see any belts on Esko. Crystal moved aside to avoid being hit. She let them go at each other. They both stood facing themselves, staring at each other with hatred lying in the depths of their eyes. With revenge creased on Esko's forehead, he charged at the ninja, but the ninja was fast enough. He bowed his head while Esko missed the punch aimed at him.

The ninja kicked Esko in the stomach with his knee, Esko reeled in pain, he fell to the ground clutching his stomach with his both hands. The ninja thought it is an opportunity to finish what Esko had started. So, he jumped toward Esko and threw a kick, but Esko dodged it and punched the ninja in his face. It broke his lips, his tongue slid down to his lips and licked off the blood. This infuriated him. He ran towards Esko hoping he'd end it all, but he miscalculated, he missed a step giving Esko the opportunity to kick him in the gut. The ninja went flying backward. While he was trying to recover from the fall, Esko charged at him and gladly offered him a Drop Kick snapping his legs like a tree branch.

The Ninja blacked out. Esko took off his white belt. "Why are you taking the belt?" Crystal asked. Esko answered, "So I can show how many I defeated." He wrapped the belt around his

body and they continued to walk north again. They walked into a small dark field of trees. They were different from any other tree they had come across. These trees stood straight, their branches reaching out to them as it would grab them, a dark gooey liquid oozed from the trees.

The tree was refreshed with the blood of the inhabitants of the city. Several minutes later, they tried leaving the field, but couldn't, they were lost, so they silently stood in one spot trying to figure out the route that would lead them out of the field. Suddenly, a strong wind began to blow, throwing dust their way. With their two hands, they guarded their eyes against the dust's assail. That was when Esko spotted it, the store back at home where he had met the store clerk. He wondered how, and why it was in the field. They headed to, Crystal was scared, going into the store was a bad idea. She tenaciously held onto Esko. He assured her he knew exactly what he was doing. He took a deep breath and reached for the door handle, trying to push away the thoughts of what might be on the other side. The store clerk welcomed them at the door. They walked in with relief.

"How have you been?"

"Very well, thank you."

"Who is she?" He gestured at Crystal.

"A friend"

Crystal smiled at the store clerk who wore an expressionless appearance. The store clerk came up to Esko with a small machine and asked him to keep it. "This is a memory keeper; a level detector, it keeps track of how many ninjas you beat and what level they are," the clerk said. "It also shows how many times you win or lose. It is able to show what level you are. That's all I wanted to give you, so get back to your adventure."

The clerk shoved them out of the store and bade them farewell. Just like the store had appeared, it disappeared in the same manner; the store once again vanished. They found their way out of the field and stumbled upon a small town called Pilgrim. They walked into the town and noticed that the town was a ghost town. Esko saw a man hiding behind a building. He tried to talk to him, but the man ran away. "Someone's coming," Crystal told Esko. A man approached Esko. "Get out of Pilgrim or I will force you out!" "Is this a challenge?" Esko asked. The man gave a hearty laugh, looked into Esko's eyes, "Of course, this is a challenge." He had an orange belt, he was a level three fighter and Esko, a level one, evident of the white belt. The man scoffed in disgust at

the confidence with, which a level one fighter challenged him.

So, the man drew a big dirt circle on the ground. "If you fall out of the circle then you will lose this fight." The man and Esko stepped in the circle. They stared at each other with hatred. The man threw a low punch, which Esko effortlessly dodged. Esko sent him a series of kicks; he lost his balance and fell. The man quickly tripped Esko with his hands - to which he toppled. This gave the man enough time to get up.

He kicked Esko, but Esko dodged his punch and got away. Esko jabbed his fists in the man's stomach, he staggered back in uneasy steps, Esko threw a dropkick on the man and the man fell down unmoving. Esko swelled with pride, he approached the rigid frame of the man lying helpless on the ground. He poked him with his fingers, but the man laid motionless. He poked him again, but this time, the man sprang to his feet and kicked Esko on the head, Esko staggered away from him. The man sprang to his feet, lurched himself at Esko hoping he'd throw him down with a punch. Esko stepped back - easily evading the punch.

"Is that all you got?" He growled, smiling infuriatingly at the man.

He tried to punch Esko, but he dodged it. Esko saw that the man was almost out of the circle, so he threw him a few more punches and gave him a Shadow-Hit, which he had learned from the television while growing up.

The man went flying out of the circle, and this time - he was knocked out. Seconds later, two hefty men came out from a house and picked up the unconscious man. "Come with us," they told Esko and Crystal. The two men went back inside the house, but Crystal didn't trust them enough to follow them. A strange feeling of unease crept slowly from the back of her mind. To her, it seemed like they were trying to hide something. But Esko went inside, after all, he was more powerful than he looked. Crystal had her trust in Esko, so she followed him. Once inside, they noticed how big and clean the house was.

A large man was sitting lazily on a couch inside. He appeared stout, bald hair and a few facial scars; one ran diagonally through his right eyebrow disrupting the hair flow, a broken lip, and a beardless jaw. He wore tattered black overalls. His right arm was tattooed with the picture of a dragon.

"Welcome to my abode."

The room, which was probably his sitting-room, was partitioned into two - by a large curtain, which ran from the ceiling down to the floor. They were uncertain about what lay on the other side of the room.

"Sit down", he said to Esko and Crystal in a commanding tone. They both sat down on the couch next to the man.

The man said, "I saw you defeat one of my fighters. My name is Pyro. Did you notice that all of Pilgrim is a ghost town? That's because the community is not fighters and some people saw you and got scared. The only fighters here in Pilgrim are in this house. There are four people here. The man you fought is called Cyber One, and the men who helped him are Cyber Two and Cyber Three. Since you beat Cyber One, I'll let you stay the night. Crystal was happy as cyber two showed them to their rooms. Esko and Crystal had to stay in the same room. Crystal still didn't trust Pyro; he was way too nice. Esko slept on the ground while Crystal slept on the bed.

The room wasn't as spacious as the ones they had slept in at Jack's place. It was poorly ventilated with just a single window.

"Do you feel different?" Crystal asked Esko.

"Yeah," he said. "As a matter of fact, I feel like a completely different person, like a grown man. One day, I would like to be an important person in history." Crystal had already fallen asleep, so Esko took out his level detector from his small backpack. He looked at it and it read that if he battled one more person, he would be on level three. Esko thought about that for a while and then put his level detector away. He looked at Crystal, she was sleeping soundly, her chest rising and falling at intervals. Soon, he too fell asleep.

Chapter 6

Cyber Two

In the morning, Cyber Three woke them up and took them to an extremely large battleground. In order to leave the house, Esko had to battle Cyber Two. Pyro told Esko the rules. "Last one standing wins!" A fight to the death? Crystal's apprehension grew. Esko got into the ring with Cyber Two. Pyro continued, "You both have staffs as weapons. If you want, you could take your opponent's weapon. Okay? Ready to fight? Go!"

Cyber Two came charging toward Esko, but he missed and Esko kicked him on the back while he toppled over. Cyber two aimed a punch at Esko, he threw his body weight behind the fist that edged closer to his face; it hit his jaw forcefully that blood pooled in his mouth. Pain erupted at the point of impact.

"Surrender, boy, before you adorn my belt", Cyber two mocked.

Esko was knocked out for a while, he was dazed. The vertiginous feeling knocked him down. He felt weird inside of him, his hearts beat faster, and he could swear he heard the rush of adrenaline in his system.

Instantaneously, the level detector beeped; "Level 3 attained!" Esko got back up with his strength renewed. He charged at Cyber Two with the staff as he went soaring through the air. He bounced on the side of the house close to the battleground and rocketed through the wall like a bullet. Cyber Two was furious, so he charged at Esko. Esko did a dropkick, throwing Cyber Two to the ground and striking him with the staff, but he got back up and started to punch Esko. Esko dodged every blow, then he threw a shadow hit; where he charged, bounced off the ground like a ball and came down on Number Two.

The hit threw Cyber Two to the ground again; this time, he lay motionless. Esko thought everything was over, but he remembered his encounter with Cyber one. He refrained from poking him and celebrating his success a little too early. With his two hands, he grasped number two's head and brought his knee cap to meet his nose. Cyber two tried in vain to slip from Esko's grasp. There was a crack as Esko released his head. Scarlet leaked from his nostrils. Without giving him a chance to nurse his wounds, Esko punched his jaw in successive progression. He paralyzed his vocal cords with a strike to the neck. Ignoring the searing pain and blood seeping from his nostrils and lips, number two made to move as quickly as possible to hit

Esko, but Esko continued battering him until he fell to the ground. His chest rising and sinking with each shallow breath he drew. Cyber Two was knocked out.

Esko was very weak from the fight. Crystal had been so scared – that her breath caught in her throat every time Esko was on the receiving end.

She ran to him when the fight was over and offered him a glass of water. Her eyes were filled with pain as she averted her gaze from him. He was badly bruised. The terror that had gripped her during the fight still laid in the layers of her eyes. She helped him stand serving as a support for Esko.

Pyro cheered him and congratulated him on his flawless victory, "Congratulations, boy, you did well. If you would like, you can go back to the room and rest up." Pyro said. Esko and Crystal returned to the room. Crystal helped him nurse his wound. She cleaned the bruises and applied pain-relieving ointments she found in the room on the bruises. Esko was glad Crystal had offered to journey with him after all. Crystal encouraged him to sleep so he'd feel refreshed, but his victory was worth celebrating.

Esko chattered about the fight, he talked about Cyber Two and how strong he was. They also

talked about how Esko got to level three, which meant he was on the same level as an orange belt ninja. Esko then took his nap, but Crystal wasn't tired; she was very thirsty from all the shouts that escaped her lips in the fight arena. She quietly opened the door and headed for the kitchen, but she stopped because she heard whispers coming from the living room. Pyro was having a discussion with Cyber Three in whispers. Pyro talked about his turn to fight Esko. All Esko needed to beat was Number Three before finally battling with him. He cautioned Cyber three on slacking. He had to defeat Esko, loosing wasn't a choice he had. Laughing, Pyro went to his room.

Crystal was shocked to hear all that had been said; she needed to warn Esko of the impending doom. He had to be well prepared if he was to defeat the duo. She'd been right all along, Pyro wasn't as nice as he'd portrayed, he had sinister plans, and he wanted to harm Esko. Pyro was an evil person.

The heavy fists of thirst gripped her throat once again twisting hard. She ran to the kitchen and gobbled the glass of water she served herself, after which she went back to the room. She grabbed Esko's level detector on the table, stared at it for a while, then proceeded to

calculate the number of levels he needed to defeat Pyro. "E-s-k-o needs three more levels to beat Pyro," the level detector dragged lazily. That meant Pyro was on level six: a rare purple belt.

Crystal thought of that for a while hoping Esko would be able to defeat Pyro. She couldn't sleep, neither could she sit still, she decided to leave the house for some fresh air. She went to different blocks, looking at different things that people had. She took mental pictures of the structures in the town. Tabletop provision shops were situated everywhere.

She encountered a young man behind a table with a sign proclaiming him as a belt repairer. A fat woman slumped on a low stool - having fruits of all kinds displayed on her table. She smiled broadly when a customer approached her table. There was hardly a tree in sight. She spent so much time admiring the town that she lost track of time. In no time, creeping darkness descended on the town, she hurriedly went back to the house.

When she got there, she saw that Esko was being trained by Pyro. Esko ran up to Crystal when he saw her, "Where were you? You shouldn't go out without letting me know," he said concerned. Esko followed her into the room

to talk to her; he was excited to tell her he'd reached level four faster than he did on level three, which meant he had reached a green belt ninja level. Crystal told Esko all she had seen in town, narrating every detail happily. They had dinner and decided to retire to bed.

Esko was tired of training, so he was getting ready to go to bed. Crystal put her things together and got ready to sleep, they decided it was best they both laid on the bed and in no time, they were both asleep.

Chapter 7

Care For Each Other

When Esko woke up, he noticed he was on the floor instead of the bed. He wondered how he'd ended up on the floor. He pushed the thoughts aside. He got up and saw Crystal sound asleep. He needed to use the bathroom, so he started towards the door. Then came a strange sound. Brrruuum! Esko noticed the floor trembling, so he thought it was an earthquake. He ran to the room and called out to Crystal to leave the room. "For what?" she asked. "There's an earthquake!" he yelled. Crystal blushed. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize you heard that." "What was that noise?" Esko said. "Oh, I just, you know...umm farted." "Aww, man why didn't you go to the restroom? Never mind, I'm going downstairs." Crystal burst into a fit of laughter.

When he went to the kitchen, he saw Pyro sitting at the table reading the papers. Then came the 'Bruuum!' sound again. "What was that?" Pyro said in shock. "Oh, that's just Crystal poisoning the room," Esko replied. Pyro left the area. While Esko was walking around the massive home, he felt the grounds quake and was immediately teleported to the arena where he beat Cyber Two, and this time, Cyber Three was waiting for

him. He was dressed for battle. Cheers from the crowd were deafening. The battle arena was spacious. "Are you ready to fight Cyber Three?" Pyro asked.

"Of course, I am," Esko said. "What do you really think? That I'm a rookie?" Cyber Three glared up at him straightening into a matching stance. Their eyes locked with different emotions coursing through them. Cyber Three came charging at him and tackled him down. The blow cracked his nose weakening him. Esko stumbled backwards grasping at his bleeding nose. Cyber three advanced towards him, his hands folded into a fist to knock Esko out. With a yell, he threw the punch at Esko's head.

Esko ducked, sliding easily into a leg sweep knocking number three's support from under him. He fell to the ground; his lungs being robbed of air. He forced himself up, fighting against the tightness in his chest. His knuckles bled from being scraped on the ground as he had forced them to serve as brakes against their will and his lips split into an oozing gash. He launched himself at Esko slamming his back into the wall that separated the battle arena from the cheering crowd. He held Esko in place punching him in the face.

Esko gasped, choking; as cyber three had his hands wrapped around his throat. Esko fell to the ground. Cyber three was all smiles; he had defeated Esko.

When Cyber Three turned away to leave the arena, the Wadjet Eye started to glow spreading its powers on Esko. He got back up with his strength restored, and a new move called the 'demolish blow' clicked in his head. He went after Cyber three, held him in a headlock and kept on punching him in the gut. He did his shadow hit and tossed him across the arena. He also did his dropkick and had Cyber Three on the ground eating dirt. Cyber Three got back up and charged at Esko. He ripped into his face with his fingers raking along his nose and mouth. He struck several blows on his neck and dug his fingers into it. He ripped them into his flesh - returning victorious with his windpipe, cutting off his air like a tourniquet. He watched in glee as blood spluttered from the broken nerves and Cyber three dropped to the ground, dead.

The crowd went mad with cheers, Pyro wore disgust on his face as he left the arena. Esko was teleported back into his room, and he saw Crystal looking at his level detector.

“I just had a fight with Cyber three”

Crystal's eyes bulged in surprise.

"When?"

"A few moments ago, and I emerged victoriously"

Crystal ran to him and hugged him.

She looked into his eyes, "Esko, you only need a bit more training and you'll reach level five. A blue belt level." she said with glee.

Esko ran off to Pyro's training gym to level up and in no time, attained level five. Exhausted, he returned to his room for a well-deserved nap. As soon as he drifted off to sleep, there, he saw Crystal, she wasn't the same anymore. He looked at her differently; with love. She was his girlfriend now. Just what he had always wanted. When he woke up, he saw Crystal waiting for him.

"Are you ready to fight Pyro?" she asked.

"Pyro?" He exclaimed. "You mean I have to fight Pyro too? Oh well, if he wants some of me I'll give him more than he can handle."

Esko and Crystal were teleported to the arena where Pyro was waiting for them. Esko stepped into the ring with a mad-dog face. He had anger etched on his face as he furrowed his brows.

Pyro came charging at him. He knocked him down, but he got back up and started to punch Pyro. Pyro kicked him; he had a weak defense, but great attacks. Esko was tired and mad because he had just fought Cyber Three and now he was fighting Pyro without prior notice. He did all his special attacks in this order: shadow hit, dropkick, and demolish blow.

Pyro was mad, he held his hands together like he was about to catch something, he screamed in a loud voice as a bluish flame emanated from his hands. With all his might, he threw the fireball at Esko. Esko dodged it and did a combo of three kicks. Although Pyro was weak, he was far from giving up.

Esko did a demolish blow twice more and became fatigued from using his special moves too many times. He stopped hitting Pyro with the momentum with which he had started the fight until he got his energy back. He then punched Pyro in the chest. Esko was so mad that the Wadjet eye started to glow again. Pulsating with energy and giving off blue flames, the Wadjet eye glowed even more than when he fought the ninja with a white belt. He charged at Pyro, going straight for his chest with a punch. The impact his fists had with Pyro's chest was fatal. A loud crack was heard as bones found a way of escape.

His ribs were broken. He put his hands to his chest growling in pain, Esko seized the opportunity of Pyro's state, he jumped up and punched the top of his head. He put Pyro's spine right through his head with that punch. Pyro was dead instantly with bone matter and blood spilling over the ground. Esko fell to the ground, gaining another level. A purple belt. A man approached him; he looked just like Pyro. Esko looked at him confused, he looked at the body of the Pyro he had defeated, were they playing pranks on him? Who are these people?

He couldn't take on this new Pyro, he was far spent to lift a finger. He laid there motionless expecting the worst to happen at any time.

"I am Pyro," the man said in a kind voice. "And I'm not here to hurt you. I'm just here to tell you that you beat all of my androids, so I'll let you stay another night then you'll have to leave in the morning."

Esko looked at him even more confused. Pyro offered him a hand and helped him up.

"Congratulations, young warrior". Pyro said to him as he turned his back on them and left the arena. They were teleported back to their rooms. Crystal attended to Esko's wounds. He winced in pain whenever her hands brushed over his

wounds. She apologized to him. She congratulated him on his victory and they both lay down and fell asleep. They were both emotionally attached to each other, deep within them there were unsaid words they conveyed to each other in their heart. They were in love; deeply. It was evident in the way they spoke and cared for each other they can see that they like and care for each other.

Chapter 8

Mia's Place

They woke up fatigued, they longed for home. This fighting and screaming had left them exhausted. They headed downstairs. They met Pyro sitting down on his couch waiting for them. He congratulates Esko once more on his victory. "The strongest", he hailed Esko to which he smiled proudly. "Before we leave can you tell us what happened and why I had to fight all those androids?" Esko queried.

"Well, I've been waiting for someone strong enough to beat my androids," Pyro explained, "And you were the one. Now that you have beaten all my androids you must talk to Mia. She lives about three blocks from here. The first house you see belongs to her. So, go there now." Packing their belongings, Esko and Crystal left the house. She held his hands, proudly. Never had she come across one as powerful as Esko. She swelled with pride.

"I'm proud of you", she smiled up at him.

"I'm proud of you too, for sticking around and supporting me".

They swung their hands like kids as they walked down the path to Mia's place. They didn't understand why Pyro had sent them to Mia. Crystal prayed it wasn't to go for another fight, she was already tired of holding onto her heart in fear of harm coming eskos' way. When they arrived at Mia's house, they noticed that it looked just like a castle. A large building with a beautiful lawn. They proceeded to knock on the door, which opened on its own. They walked into the house, calling for Mia. A woman with bulging muscles like a man on steroids came in to meet them; an Amazonian Woman.

"I'm Mia," she said. "Do you need anything? What can I do for you?" "Pyro sent me to talk to you," Esko said.

"Humph, she breathed, well, well, well, you must be Esko the unbeatable," she said. "Pyro sent you to challenge me. So that's what you're going to do. We will fight outside. I'm on level six. What level are you on? A lousy level four. Ha!" Her words were latched with mock and contempt. "Let's rumble," he said. He charged at Mia and she dodged it barely missing the blow by a hairsbreadth, but she came back with a hard blow to the gut. Esko didn't give up; he went

blow for blow, but he never hit her until he realized she had a great defense, but weak attacks. So, he thought if he lowered her defense and used his special attack, he might finish her.

Suddenly, his fist slammed into her face throwing her off her feet. They tussled each other but stumbled apart for a brief second to catch their breaths - before diving back at each other.

Eyes narrowed in determination, Esko punched Mia in the face - cracking her lips. The blood slid down her lips soaking her clothes. Anger creased through her forehead. She fought back like a wounded animal throwing fits. She lunged herself at him pushing him to the ground. Esko was on his hands and knees scrambling to his feet when she came down on him. He absorbed the trauma, swallowing the pain. She was more powerful than any he had encountered.

He ignored the blood seeping from the cut on his arm and went for her legs. He punched her right leg hard with both of his arms. She fell to the ground writhing in pain. He tried snapping her legs, but missed, she repaid him by punching his jaw. A loose tooth graced the ground. The blood felt warm as he spat them in her direction. She had bitten more than she should chew. This was the right time to use his special skills, he

thought. He started with a combo of several shadow hits, and then a dropkick. His special hits lowered Mia's defenses faster and she landed on the ground. He then did his final move when she was getting up. He charged at her letting her have a taste of his demolish blow. Mia went flying and hit her own house, and then she was out.

Esko collapsed on the ground, exhausted. Crystal ran to him.

Moments later, Mia got back up. "Come with me into my house," she told Esko and Crystal. They were skeptical, but she assured them she wasn't a coward to take them unawares. They cautiously filed into the house where she brought out a small container that had pills. "The pills will help you two become Smarter, Stronger, Bigger and Faster in a shorter amount of time. These pills are called EVOL, which simply stands for Evolution.

So, take these for now. If you want, you could stay the night because it's starting to rain outside." She sent them to their room. Esko was in his big room; a single chair, a chandelier, and a king-sized bed adorned the room. He took out his level detector staring at it, "You need to fight two more people to gain another level", it beeped. He was excited about his progress. He

never imagined he would attain such a level in a short period. He was passionate about the adventure; he'd finish what his father started. Minutes later, he drifted off to sleep.

His thoughts drifted to Crystal, she was everything a man could ask for; supporting, caring, beautiful, sculptured into perfection. She was a strong woman and she was endowed with wisdom.

Crystal sat in her room thinking of Esko, he had become stronger than he was. His progress was swift, and she was proud of the man he had become. Being on the adventure was the perfect decision she had ever taken. Crystal prepared for bed thinking about the ability to fight people. She wished she could do what Esko does, she would stand by his side fighting off the bad guys. She thought of her father and the powers he possessed, she felt his presence in the room. She longed to have the strength he possessed, she wanted to be like him, she wanted revenge too for his untimely demise.

A gentle breeze blew past her giving her peace, she felt calm and at peace with herself. A surge of adrenaline seeps into her system after a while, she felt different.

Moments later, she found herself drifting in and out of consciousness as sleep took over her whole being.

Chapter 9

Scared Situation

The rays of the sunlight peeked through the window blinds in a desperate attempt to see who was on the other side. Crystal was the first to wake up, she progressed to Esko's room announcing the break of day by pulling the blinds apart letting them dance to the victory of seeing who stood on the other side.

Esko shielded his eyes from the assault of the rays with a pillow. He tossed and kicked the sheets; he hadn't had enough sleep, he wanted more but the adventure must go on. He grudgingly rose from the bed and went ahead to prepare for the journey that laid ahead. They went down the stairs and met Mia waiting for them in the living room. "You must leave now because I have somewhere to go immediately." She said to them. So, they quickly gathered their belongings and went out of the door. Mia rapidly walked down the roadway and out of sight. Esko and Crystal remembered the pills Mia had given them; EVOL. They debated over swallowing the pills.

"I'm not I trust Mia", Crystal spoke up. After their encounter with Pyro, no one was trustworthy.

"I know you don't, but it wouldn't harm to take the pills".

Esko tried to sound confident. They argued some more before finally deciding on giving the pills a try. They decided to swallow the pills, it tasted weird in their mouths, but they didn't feel it had any effects on them. They walked around town looking at the buildings that lined the streets, moving nowhere in particular until Esko heard a whisper of Echoes. The sound seemed to call him, which made him try to follow it. Crystal went along with him. It took him to the outskirts of town.

He then went into a dark and foggy forest. The woods around creaked as if alive. As he got deeper into the forest, he found out what the whispers said. He heard it clearly now: "Prove yourself Esko, Prove yourself." He quickly turned back and tried to leave the foggy forest - unsure of where the voice came from, but he didn't know, which way to go. He was lost. All the paths appeared the same; foggy with trees everywhere. His heart was beating faster and then he started to run. He ran fast, increasing his pace until he hit a solid wall.

He stepped back and looked at the wall. He'd seen it before: it was a house, which looked familiar to him; the old wooden store. He

confidently walked in, and he saw the store clerk who had given him the Wadjet eye and the level detector. The Store Clerk turned to him and said, "It's too late to go back." "What do you mean?" Esko asked, moving closer to him. "You know the voices you heard? That was the Wizard calling you telepathically. Now you can't go back. He wants to challenge you," the store clerk said in a grave voice, "So you've got to give him all you got." He said to him before he left. Standing at the doorstep, the store clerk touched his shoulder transferring energy to Esko. Pulsating waves of soft electricity coursed through him. The store clerk said to him, "Now you have a greater defense, and my rare special. It's called ICE OF HELL. It has a great attack, but it will fatigue you very fast. Go and battle the great Wizard with all the power you have. I am counting on you to on this one."

Esko and Crystal stepped out of the store. The store vanished in the mist and the forest was soon quiet again. Esko and Crystal left walking hoping to find another town. As they walked, they heard the howling of wolves in the distance, and in no time, they bumped right into them. The beasts, extremely large with red eyes and grey fur, growled and barked. They surrounded Esko and Crystal. As if by a single command, the wolves would attack. Esko then fought back. He

tossed them around one by one like rag dolls. They all got scared, whimpered, and scurried back into the mist. Esko followed the wolves hoping to find a way out. They ran and ran, but they lost track of the wolves. So, they stopped to catch their breath. Then the fog started to clear up.

It was at that moment that they saw a werewolf standing nine feet tall and weighing over one thousand pounds. The werewolf stood in place with a powerful gaze that would make an average person drop dead. Its breathing was so powerful that the sounds itself had an echoing tone in the ground. "I am Jamil Bardawulf. Anyone entering my forest should have been eaten by my wolves. But you are much more powerful than the average person and therefore my next meal will be your head."

"You dare challenge me?" Esko questioned. He launched himself at the beast, slamming his fist into its neck. The beast whimpered in pain. Badawulf kicked Esko with his hind legs throwing him to the ground. It jumped up and made to smother Esko with his weight. Esko ducked, and the beast fell to the ground with a thundering sound. Esko swung from a tree branch and safely landed on the beast's back. With his two hands, he pulled on the ears of the beast. He pulled with

all his might, the beast tried throwing him off, but Esko went to work with determination. Its ears snapped as they were severed from its head. Badawulf succeeded in throwing Esko off its back as it growled and hurled itself at trees. Esko proceeded to batter the animal with his fists in its stomach. He delivered his blows successively without letting the animal off. Puff, went the sound that rent the air, Badawulf's stomach had blown open. The ground was lubricated with Bardawulf's gut and the stench, stinging. After Esko's victory over Bardawulf, they continued their walk and after a while, they walk into a wooden sign that read: 'Wizard's house up ahead'.

They forged ahead and finally fell upon a magnificent building. It shouldn't be termed a house - he thought to himself, it was more like a Palace. He walked up to the one-hundred-foot door, wondering who was on the other side. Crystal then knocked on the door; they were both scared as they expected giants to come out, and so they waited for someone to come to the door.

Chapter 10

The Great Anubus

The door creaked open slowly and eerily by itself, so they carefully walked in. The first thing they saw was a big dining room. The room had to be at least two hundred feet high. Esko saw a couch and walked up to it. He sat slowly on it and Crystal followed suit. Then Jack came and told Esko, "I'm happy to see you again. Follow me." Jack took them to a different room that looked like a big arena, and on the other side was the Wizard sitting on a throne. He looked like an old man wearing a long sleeveless cloak and a pointed hat. He then said, "Esko, welcome to my home. I heard that you've beaten many people, even my ninjas in the past, and leveled up faster than anyone else. So, tell me, do you have some hidden powers?"

"Where do your powers come from?" The wizard paused his talk and leaned forward on his throne, and didn't wait for any reply, "Well, that doesn't really matter because I'm going to consume your powers. I hope you came prepared; because you won't leave here alive".

The Wizard got up from his throne and took off his silk coat, and turned to Esko, "Your powers

are mine! Hahaha!" He raised his staff in the air and tried to strike Esko, but he evaded the attack.

"Drop your staff and come at me like a man, don't be a coward", Esko' roared.

"I will have you and your powers", the wizard thundered back tossing his staff away. Esko got in the middle of the arena and said confidently: "I don't think so." Esko charged at the Wizard and hit him with a combo of kick and punches. The wizard evaded them all.

"Is that all you've got?"

This infuriated Esko. With a yell, he lunged at the wizard, swung his arm in an attempt to generously serve the Wizard a blow, but the Wizard gripped his swinging arm with his right arm. He punched the bicep hard with his left. He struck Esko in the face, blood spluttered from his nose and lips. Esko flailed his arms as he staggered backwards. The wizard advanced towards Esko, Esko pounced on him delivering his different skills on him. The wizard was weakened quickly so immediately from above, a new fighter entered the ring. He called himself THE GREAT ANUBUS, ANUBUS?

Crystal thought to herself, she had definitely heard that name somewhere, but where? Then

it hit her, he was the one together with Cyborg that murdered her father. Her father had suffered a gruesome death at his hands. She was scared of Esko.

“Esko, please be careful, Anubis is dangerous”, she screamed at Esko with concern.

He jumped up in the air and kicked Esko. Crystal wanted to do something, but she just stood outside the arena, hopeless. Fear gripped her, if only she was strong enough, she would have given Esko a helping hand. She watched in horror as Esko fell to the ground while he approached him. As if on cue, Esko then got up and did his Demolish Blow. This seriously weakened the Great Anubis so, just as the first time, another person came into the ring and this time it was Jack.

Jack threw several punches at him sending him sprawling to the ground. He was lost in confusion as he looked on with his mouth agape. Jack was meant to be a friend and not a foe.

“Jack?” Crystal screamed. What had the wizard done to him or was he just pretending to be nice all along? Esko believed the wizard was able to telepathically take control over Jack because the jack he knew was nothing like the impostor before him.

Jack laughed as he walked towards Esko. He then said, "Esko you can't beat me. Believe me, you have no chance of winning. So just give up and leave." But Esko refused to give up. With all he had left in him, he stood up and charged at Jack. Jack was expecting it and immediately countered with his special: The Killer Fatality. It was a combo of strong punches and about three kicks. Esko fell to the ground with a heavy thud. He bruised his arms and knees. Stars floated past his eyes. For a while, all he could hear was the heavy pounding in his head.

He tried to get up, he took a deep breath, it hurt his ribcage. He inched his arms under him and pushed himself up. This hurt. He stayed that way for a while, on his hands and knees with his head hanging, but Jack stood around waiting to give him another dose of the kick. This time, he kicked him in the face, the sounds from Esko's groans, rent the air. Esko went flying in a backward motion so rapidly into thin air until he hit the end of the arena. Crystal then came into the arena and covered Esko. She said, "Leave him alone, he can't fight anymore." She cried!

She covered him with a frame, she is emotional and doesn't want to see Esko die as her father did, in vain. But Wizard, Anubus, and Jack ignored her and pushed her aside. She was hurt

from the fall. Being so emotional she began to shout in rage. "RAHHHHHHHHH!!!" She began to glow and suddenly an item appeared around her neck. It was a necklace. It held something like the shape of a key. It is a key and she is a healer. She then rushed over to Esko again and held onto him on the floor. She noticed that her hands started to glow. Waves of energy were being transferred over to Esko and as if nothing ever happened to him, he stood back up as if he wasn't even hurt. "Now you're dead," grunted Esko with his serious face.

He did his combos of specials in anger. He first did his Shadow Hit, then his Drop Kick, then his Demolish Blow. This sent Anubus wailing. He was badly bruised and at least, three of his teeth, knocked out. Anubus was then out for good. Esko then looked at the Wizard and started to grin and growl. The wizard was confused as to how a boy as Esko possessed such powers. He was indeed the Chosen one. He threw his Ice of Hell at the Wizard. The Wizard tried to run, but the ball of energy, which glowed with blue flames, penetrated him like a laser and exploded. The Wizard fell to the floor screaming. The wizard was no longer in the arena, he exploded. But just before the wizard exploded, he yelled, "I promise you, I shall return".

Jack was the only one left, the wizard and Anubus had already been defeated. Esko was weak and had no strength left to fight Jack. So, he let himself fall to the ground. At that point, another person walked into the Arena. To Esko's view, it looked like he was finished, but the voice said, "Esko I'm here to save you. It's me, Jack. The Jack you've been fighting is an impostor. That thing is a shapeshifter named Shen".

The real Jack jumped into the fighting arena. He ran in Shen's direction with rage creasing across his brows. Shen did the same - meeting him halfway; he threw a punch at Jack, which he flawlessly evaded. He lifted Shen from his legs and threw him down. He pounced on him like an animal starved of food for months, throwing blows in his face. He held his hands to his face about the assault, but Jack wasn't having any of that. Blood pooled in his face, his nose was badly battered, his teeth were scarlet from the red pool that gathered in his mouth. He was momentarily blinded by the blood that had flowed in his eyes. He would die if he let Jack continue assaulting him. He lifted his head and smashed it into Jack's.

Jack was dazed from the concussion. He fell off Shen but got back up immediately. He did his combos of specials and defeated Shen. Jack walked up to Esko and Crystal.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t here when you needed me. Shen is a snake shapeshifter, he appeared as me because he knows how close we are, and he knows you trust me so much. I’m really sorry”

He offered Jack his hands. Let me get you somewhere safe. They walked out of the Wizards house and boarded Jack's hovercraft. On the drive back to Jack's home, Jack looked in the backseat to see how the two were doing as they were silent. Esko and Crystal were holding each other. Arriving at his house. He offered his room where Esko and Crystal slept through the night for they had no energy to move.

Chapter 11

The Surprise

With dawn seeping into darkness, Esko and Crystal woke up, they yawned and stretched lazily. It was a new day, Esko wondered the challenges he had to take on that day after what he had been through the previous day. He smiled with confidence, if he was able to defeat the wizard and the great Anubus, then there was no one he couldn't defeat. His strength can't be matched by any, he assured himself.

He was determined to take on any challenge brought his way. The smell of blood and cracking bones had become a norm he was too familiar with. He longed for one with each breaking day. They both got out of their separate rooms. They bumped into Jack who told Crystal to follow him, while Esko had to stay behind. She followed him unsure of why he'd asked Esko to stay behind. She followed him until she found herself in a large dressing room. Jack said to her, "Pick any set of clothes that you like." She gasped in excitement and raced into the farthest part of the room without waiting for the next invitation.

Crystal walked around the room filled with clothes. She saw all kinds of dresses, mirrors

stood upright and proud, tables laid comfortably in most corners of the room, chairs sat comfortably on the floor, the floors shone, they were made of marbles. Never had she seen so many clothes in her life. The clothing was neatly arranged in rows in an iron hanger. Crystal had so much to pick from, but there was only one portion of the clothes she loved the most. It was the Ninja outfit. When she put it on, her hair was sticking out a lot so she told Jack to cut her hair and make it shorter - so her suit can fit her perfectly.

Jack motioned her to sit on a low stool in front of the mirror. He grabbed a scissors placed on one of the tables and went to work. She had mixed feelings while her hair was being cut. She hoped she'd made the right decision. When Jack was done, she slipped on the dress, she looked just like a ninja with a red belt. She looked even better than the other ninjas that they had seen. She swelled with pride. She thanked Jack who was standing behind her. He admired and complimented her on her looks before he exited the room.

She took several minutes admiring her frame before the mirror. She ran to Esko - beaming with smiles. He complimented her on how perfect she looked but looked on in surprise at her hair. She

shoved him in the shoulder and flopped down on the couch beside him. After a few hours of sitting around the house doing nothing, Crystal noticed that her throat was hurting. It came as a tug, pain, seared through her and all of a sudden, she started to cough. She took some pills to stop the painful sensation, but to her, that seemed to worsen the situation.

In a matter of seconds, her body temperature skyrocketed. She then started to get a high fever. Then minutes later, she informed Esko that her bones started to feel weak. "You should take a nap," Esko told her. He led her to her room, and she flagged off.

When she was napping, she had different dreams; strange dreams of being killed. She jolted awake with the sense of dread washing over her, the blurred scenes and screams of dying from her dreams fading. She must have been having a nightmare. When she woke up, she was drenched in sweat, and her body was freezing. So, she put her dress back on - so that she could be more comfortable. She went back to rest on her bed; while dozing off, she heard a knock on the door. she stood up to open it, on getting there, she noticed it was her sister. "What a surprise!" Crystal said. Crystal's sister came over because she heard that Crystal was

very ill. After talking for an hour Crystal's sister had to leave. So, she was gone within minutes.

She jerked awake. It was only a dream; she missed her sister. She wished she was really there with her, she would have known exactly what to do. A few minutes later, Crystal was on the couch and she felt her energy levels recovering. She noticed that she was feeling better, her strength was building back up, so she put on her ninja suit again. She felt better and more comfortable. Her temperature had normalized.

Chapter 12

The Ninja Fight

Since Crystal had gotten better, Esko thought that they should continue their adventure, so they both walked outside. They walked around town until Esko saw a ninja. He wanted to approach him, but Crystal stopped him; she wanted the opportunity to fight the ninja. Having watched Esko fight for so long, she wanted a taste of it. This taste felt tingly against her tongue, rasping down her throat like momentous pleasure. Esko nodded and let her.

She became crazy with it as she charged at the ninja. She approached the ninja and challenged him to a fight. The ninja did not refuse and rushed into battle. Crystal tried kicking the ninja on his legs, but he ducked by somersaulting. He proceeded towards her. He got hold of her arms and twisted trying to break them. She screamed in pain.

Esko stood unsure of what to do, this was Crystal's fight, he didn't need to meddle in it. He watched in rage, but Crystal managed to escape from his grip. She kicked him in the gut throwing him off balance for a while. He held his stomach groaning. She ignored his groans punching him

some more. She kicked him in the face with her legs. She sent him sprawling to the ground. She advanced to him on the ground where he lay. She tore off his shirt. While they were fighting, Esko noticed a strange ninja walk past; he had never seen that type of ninja before. It appeared to be a Cybernetic Ninja. He was unlike the other ninjas he had battled or come across. He was larger in build and fiercer. He left Crystal to finish off the other ninja as he followed the cybernetic ninja to see what this ninja was trying to do.

Crystal delivered a series of punches successively to the ninja's chest. She ended up breaking most of his ribs. She dug her fingers into his chest cleaving his life pumping organ from its abode; his heart. She held it up in the ninja's face whose eyes gradually closed in death. She gently laid the heart that had been drained of its fluid on the ninja, wiped her blood-stained hands with his shirt and waited for Esko to return.

Esko, on the other hand, walked down the street and into an alley. He couldn't find it. He was gone, just as it had come. He turned around leaving the alley disappointed. A blow to his head sent him sprawling to the ground. The cybernetic ninja came forth from the darkness he hid. He laughed wickedly as he walked towards Esko. He lifted Esko with his both hands

and flung him across the ground like he was weightless. The ninja ran towards Esko, he had heard about the stories of his prowess. He wasn't going to give him that chance. He got to Esko, wrapped his hands around his neck and tried strangling him. He applied so much pressure as he lifted him from the ground with his hands still around his neck. Esko twisted to get free from his holds. He kicked the ninja hard on his groin sending him staggering.

He held his groins in pain - growling in pain. Without waiting for a split second of recovery, he ran to the ninja and punched him in the face, his nose and lips crack. Blood flowed down in tears of red. He was unsure of the pain to tend to. He continuously slammed his fists into his face as blood spluttered some more. The ninja tried desperately to evade Esko's punches. Esko slammed his head into the ninjas. Stars burst in his vision as he dropped to the ground.

Esko hit him hard on his neck. The blood drained out of him in torrents. His skin took on the pallor of a corpse. He laid still, lifeless. Esko had defeated him so he went back towards Crystal and when he did, he saw that Crystal had already defeated the Ninja. He was very pleased and proud of her. She was stronger than he thought. Crystal was so happy that she was jumping

around and laughing at the ninja. Jack appeared before them, he listened to Crystal chatter about her flawless victory. She had defeated a ninja on her own. Esko questioned Jack about the cybernetic ninja.

"Have you heard about a cybernetic ninja?"

"Any descriptions?"

"Huge, without a belt"

"I doubt I know anything about that. I have nothing else to do while you guys are gone, so I'm going to come along with you guys for a while - if you don't mind." Esko and Crystal unanimously agreed, and Jack officially became part of the team.

Jack told Esko and Crystal that he's on a level three and has great experience in fighting the ninjas. After Jack finished talking, Esko saw the store clerk walking afar. He ran towards him and tried to catch up to him because he was some distance away. He screamed out to the store clerk to halt. He wanted guidance on where to go next. The store clerk was silent for a while; then he started to stutter while he spoke. He said, "There is a new enemy that was born, and he is one enemy that no one can stop. This new enemy can absorb all your energy. I don't have enough information to tell you about him right

now. He is evil and more powerful than anyone you've ever faced. He cannot be defeated easily like the rest; he is a hard nut to crack. At the moment, I don't know his name, but sooner or later, you will have to challenge him. But for now, why don't all three of you start doing some real training and raise those levels."

Esko had a questioning look, he needed more information on what to do, but then the clerk vanished out of sight. Esko discussed what the clerk had revealed to him with his team members. While the trio thought about this mysterious new enemy, Esko didn't want to believe the store clerk.

The feeling of pride weighed more than his fears. None was stronger than he was. He has become more powerful than anyone who existed in his time. He tossed the words of the clerk into the trash. Jack then said, "Let's go start our training." Jack walked to his gym while Esko and Crystal followed. Jack did pull-ups while Esko was bench pressing and Crystal was on the dumbbells. They trained for a while - perspiring greatly. They exercised some more before Crystal collapsed. Hours later, the trio was sweating so much that they all took a break, but then they noticed someone was knocking on the door. Jack headed to the door to check who was

knocking; he saw that it was his brother that he hasn't seen in a decade.

"Brother!" Jack's brother screamed and embraced Jack.

Jack was surprised, he wondered the aim of the wind that blew his brother His way. He was skeptical about letting him in.

"Do we stand here forever? Why not let me in into your home", he gestured with a smirk.

Jack didn't trust His brother, he had never trusted him, but he let him in anyway

His brother entered the home. Jack said, "So brother what brings you here?" Jack's brother answered, "Well first I should tell my name to your friends. My name is Jason, and I haven't seen my brother in about ten years, and I came here to get a good workout and say hi to a long lost brother. He stretched forth his hands and shook Esko and crystal. They welcomed him, gladly. They went back to the training room with him and continued their training.

"It's kind of getting late brother and I think we all need some rest for tomorrow," Jack suggested.

"Let me spend the night here", his brother pleaded with him. He couldn't refuse him. He and his brother went into his room. They talked

about how each of them had been until they drifted off to sleep. Esko and Crystal stayed back in the training room. They had a late-night conversation about everything that has happened since they arrived on White Dragon Island. They were glad Jack and his brother were united after a period of not crossing each other's path. After some time, they both hugged each other and parted ways to sleep in their separate rooms.

In the middle of the night, Crystal needed some water, so she got up quietly and opened the door to get out of the room. While she walked down the hall, she noticed a voice that sounded like Jason. She tried to listen to his voice, which was coming from the living room. It was Jason sitting on the couch talking to himself. "This is the night that I will finally gain my full energy and destroy that boy Esko." Jason snarled.

Crystal was shocked. Esko? How has he wronged Jason? Jason began to shapeshift his body. He looked completely different. In his right arm, he didn't have an arm instead he had a full blade sword that formed out of his bicep and he also grew out a set of horns and dark tentacles for braids of hair. He looked like a man that had just come out of the inferno. He just kept changing until he looked like a gruesome demon. After

Jason's transformation, he stepped outside and at this moment, Crystal turned around to run back into her room as she was extremely frightened. At this moment, Jason stopped and turned around and came back in - because he thought he heard someone. He slowly walked towards the hall - towards Crystal. She was so frightened that she dashed back into her room before she was seen by Jason and went straight to bed panting. She had never seen such a thing before, all the air seemed to be sucked from her lungs. Panting, she covers over her head.

Chapter 13

Crystal's Victory

Crystal woke up early in the morning; she washed up and tried on a new dress. While combing her hair, she remembered what she had witnessed the previous night, Jason transforming into a beast. She shrugged the thoughts off. She walked into the living room and there, sat Jason. She immediately noticed that Jason was sitting upright on the couch in an awkward position - silently staring at her. Jack and Esko were still asleep she guessed, there was no evidence they had come down as the window blinds were still drawn. "Crystal, I know you saw my transformation last night."

She pretended not to understand what he meant as she looked at him confused.

"You don't have to pretend, and this is why I'm going to make you vanish forever, so you don't let the cat out of the bag. I have a mission, which I must accomplish and anyone who stands in my way would feel my wrath."

"And you're not sensible, if you are, you'd know you'd be exposing yourself. Esko and Jack could walk in on us", she said with a smirk.

Immediately, Jason transformed into his villain's side. Crystal backed away in shock. At the same time, Crystal charged up her aura into her first attack. Jason attacked Crystal. He made the first move, he stretched forth his flaming blades trying to sever her parts into tiny pieces, but she dodged all his attacks. One after another he tried to cut her in half, but she was much quicker at evading his attacks. Crystal was on the defensive line, she didn't want to attack him just yet, she wanted to stress him out. Jason was too dumb to notice, he went at her with all his might. Like a bull, he launched himself at her with his horns hoping to ram them into her. She evaded him effortlessly sliding under him. He proceeded to trash her with his tentacles. He extended them towards her and just like the other moves he tried on her, she ducked easily.

He was frustrated, anger flowed in his veins, he transformed back to his human form. He believed he'd defeat her easily. Then the moment was right, she lunged herself at him following it up by doing her Special Attack dubbed Chi Force. A double-fisted front punch. With that attack, Jason was weakened, but he still did not give up. Jason was able to high front kick Crystal's face and send her streaking backward like a floppy ragdoll into the ground. She quickly jumped back up and roundhouse

kicked Jason in the abdomen and a painful stabbing feeling was felt in his gut; that was the attack that made him really twitch.

He held his stomach and dropped to his knees. Crystal not losing the moment, charged her aura into her fist and exploded her Chi Force. Cringing, Jason held his hands up in surrender. He was defeated. He was still able to get back on his feet with a delay. After being beaten to the ground one last time, he did not want to continue the fight with Crystal anymore and surrendered. So, he rushed out of the house. Crystal was so happy that she had defeated someone stronger than all the other opponents she had thus far. She was amazed at all the power she had within her. She could not hold her excitement and she ran to Esko's room to inform him of her triumph.

Esko then woke up and Crystal explained all that just happened. Jack eavesdropped on them as he was walking into the living room and apologized. He always knew something was not settling right with his brother. "He must have been taken over and controlled by the evils of this island. This is most unfortunate." Jack said in a disappointed tone. Crystal responded, "Do not worry. I think we all knew something was going on with him, but my strength was plenty to defeat him and in

fact, I was able to reach my power level three." Esko was proud of Crystal and smiled at her. He intervened, "We will have to leave this town soon. We need to continue this adventure." They gathered up all their belongings and stepped outside and Jack stayed behind. Esko said in a calm tone voice, "Jack has to stay home for a while to settle things with his brother, so he will not be joining us."

Crystal acknowledged this and then they started walking towards the outskirts of the town. The people they came across stared at them - talking in whispers. While walking on a dusty road for several hours they both saw a Ranch. They approached it to see if they could get fresh drinking water and if possible, a little that could spare them for a bath. The dusty road left a lot of imprints on them. They came across a ranch, saw a rancher in a fenced-off area and waved over at him to get his attention. The rancher walked over and said, "Howdy folks, my name is Wayne. How can I help you?"

Crystal replied, "May we please have some water? We have been walking for many hours, we're tasty and dirty and we are somewhat lost." Wayne responded kindly, "Sure thing kiddo, why not." He walked them both into his home and let them rest up while they drank their fresh ice-

cold water. When they had drunk to their fill, Wayne started a conversation with them.

"Where are you folks coming from because I doubt you're from around here."

"We're really not from around here, ours is a long story", Esko replied.

The man went ahead to talk about how he needs someone to help him with his cattle.

"You folks want to take up a job of tending to my cattle?"

Crystal shook her head in disagreement while Esko apologized and said they were too busy to help him out. Wayne frowned in disappointment and didn't hesitate to send them off his home. He quickly rushed them off his property and said, "If you won't help me, then I won't help you." Esko and Crystal left the ranch thinking about Wayne and how insane and rude he was. While they were walking, they noticed that they began to turn transparent; they were becoming invisible and were disappearing into thin air. They were in shock and didn't know what to do. They were confused. No words were exchanged, just the mutual confusion visible in their facial expressions. They quickly held onto each other and immediately, they dematerialized into the air.

When Esko opened his eyes, he saw Crystal at his side. He looked around and noticed that he had been teleported to a whole new place, one that he had never been to before. He looked around and wondered if he would be able to get them out. The area had a dungeon feel to it. It was in fact, a dungeon. It was very dark with stone walls and torches illuminated the walls from which they hung. The aroma was putrid like sulfur and rotting corpses. Greenish gooey liquid oozed from the walls, the floor was a mixture of the goo and blood. Human skeletons adorned the floor. Giant rats squeaked in annoyance at the intruders who would want to share their meal. Irritation coursed through them; Crystal threw up a couple of times before helping Esko up.

Chapter 14

The Mysterious Dungeon

Esko and Crystal walked around in the mysterious dungeon. They tried to find a way out.

"I recognize this place." Crystal said, holding onto Esko tightly. "I've seen it in my dreams. My father has been here before, I remember. My mother once told me the story of my father and his relationship with this place. He was once a powerful Dixie trainer. She said that my father fought so many evil people. He fought one of the four Supreme Gods, but he lost the fight and, in the process, ended up losing his life by the hands of Anubis and Cyborg who violently ripped off my father's head from his body. He opened up my father's stomach and spilled his intestines on the floor." sobbed Crystal. Esko held her close and tried pacifying her.

"We would get revenge for your father".

They proceeded farther into the dungeon and Esko saw a figure hiding in the shadows afar. The man spoke out loud, "Welcome to my world. My name is Cyborg. I have brought you both here because you have something special that

belongs to me and that, my friends, is the Wadjet Eye."

"I don't plan on giving it up without a fight," Esko said, boldly.

"So... you want to fight me?" Cyborg retorted, "Very well then, prepare to give your soul to me because I will have this Victory! Muah ha ha ha!"

Esko prepared himself to fight, then he instantly had an apparition of his father. The image was that of his father slaying Cyborg, but this only would have been - if he had gotten the chance to fight him, but since he passed away before he could battle him, the responsibility passed over to Esko.

A cyborg with his tall stature slowly walked towards Esko. As he got closer, his pace begun to pick up until he was charging towards Esko. Cyborg then did a Shadow Tackle and smashed Esko across the floor. Esko had his breath knocked out of him and a large purple bruise formed on his chest instantly. He quickly got up from the ground and ignored his injuries and stayed focused on Cyborg. He quickly pounced forward with his own Shadow Hit and connected it to Cyborg, but it was like hitting a solid wall: it had no effect on Cyborg; not even a twitch.

Instead, Cyborg laughed at Esko. "Is that all you got?" He roared at Esko.

Esko was determined to put Cyborg down so he continued to do his specials: Drop Kick, Shadow Hit, Demolish Blow, and Ice of Hell. But none of them had any effect on Cyborg.

Cyborg confidently walked up to Esko and swung his leg towards Esko's face and bashed his head so severely on the wall that he was knocked out before he fell to the ground. Without any hesitation, Crystal jumped into the fight and did her Dragon Flash, but that too had no effect on Cyborg. It appears that Cyborg was just too strong for the couple to fight. Cyborg stood tall and laughed in a wicked manner. While Cyborg walked towards Crystal she continued to do her special Dragon Flash trying to weaken Cyborg, but he continued advancing towards her until he was within arm's reach of her.

He grabbed her by the neck and began to choke her. She gasped for air and squeaked like a mouse caught in a trap. She screamed out loud for help, but no one came. Esko was too weak to help her. Cyborg tossed Crystal's body to the floor in her weakened state. She smashed her back forcefully on the ground, this forced the air from her lungs into a wheeze. She whimpered. While looking at both bodies on the floor, it

brought him much happiness to see the two slowly die. He thrived on killing.

Crystal was a few feet away from Esko, she looked at him with tears in her eyes, she wasn't going down without a fight, so she crawled with her last bit of strength and placed her hand on his chest. Her hand began to glow while she activated her last hope: Healing of Angels. A bright light of energy radiated from her hand and into Esko's chest. Then it all stopped - and she lay motionless on the floor.

Receiving Crystal's last bit of energy, Esko was able to get up off the floor, he was a bit dazed and weak. He staggered a little before his strength came back to him. When his strength came back to him, he went ahead and charged at the Cyborg with all his might throwing in the best he had. The cyborg advanced menacingly towards him, but he tackled him to the ground. The Cyborg was furious, no one had ever thrown him down. He lunged himself once more against the cyborg, but he sent him spiraling and did his Supreme Special: The Fatality of Hell. A ball of fury unleashed from his palms and continued to grow as it reached Esko. Esko used all his strength to stop this massive red ball of fire from getting to him, but it had become too much for him and his last thoughts were of Crystal and the

sacrifice she had made. "AHHHHHHHH!!!!!!"
Esko screamed in pain.

The energy ball engulfed him and shredded his body; it smashed his bones and burned off most of his skin. Esko's body lay on the floor not having the strength to get back up. Cyborg walked victoriously to Esko and ripped off the Wadjet Eye necklace off him. He admired it for a while laughing hysterically.

Instantly, Esko began to feel as if his levels were dropping. With his level detector nearby, he turned it on and scanned himself; it registered to zero. Cyborg smirked and looked eye to eye with Esko and said, "Thank you for your soul. You had a vast amount of energy, but now it all belongs to me. Muah ha ha ha ha!" As Cyborg laughed over their bodies Esko and Crystal looked over at each other. They held each other's hands and tears fell from both their faces. They had failed. Within those moments they both began to slowly dissolve into the air just like it had happened before their sudden appearance in the dungeon. "Noooooooo! Esko shouted at Cyborg, I will get my revenge for this..." Into thin air, they both vanished, nothing remained, not even a sound. The only thing left was darkness.

Chapter 15

The Lonely Home

Esko slowly opened his eyes as he laid on the floor beside Crystal, "Ugh, what happened?" "Where am I?" Esko questioned no one in particular. He sat up talking in his environment. He slowly got up and then reached for Crystal who equally looked puzzled. He stretched forth his hands to her, she grabbed onto them and slowly rose to her feet. Looking around, Esko immediately became familiar with his surroundings. He said aloud, "We're home and then as - if he was unsure, "Am I home?" He was so excited, and a bit confused at the same time. He had missed him so much and here he was looking into the face of his home.

He raced through the streets with Crystal in hand. His joy was immeasurable, but he abruptly came to a halt when a thought crossed his mind. He thought to himself, I know my mother would be very upset if I bring home a stranger. But Crystal was no stranger to him and he knew he had no other choice. So, he told Crystal, "I am going to take you to my mother, so I can introduce you to her." Crystal showed no sign of worry as she looked into Esko's eyes. "After all we have been through, I think your mother

would understand." They both walked through the busy street to get to the house. Finally, Esko was standing in his front yard wondering if his mother would accept Crystal. He felt so much love for the lady beside him, the one person who had sacrificed everything just to be with him. His mother would definitely have to accept her.

He opened the front door only to see his mother lying on the couch, seemingly unwell. Esko rushed over to the couch, he moved a little closer to see what was wrong with his mother. Her face was pale with dark rings around her eyes, there were tiny black spots all over her skin, the whites of her eyes were pink in color. Esko's sister ran downstairs, with tears in her eyes, and hugged Esko. "Mom is going to leave us forever." Rose cried out loud. "What is going on? What are you talking about?" Esko asked desperately.

With a faint voice, Rosey said, "Come here, my child, it's been ages I set my eyes on you. How have you been?" Esko moved close to his mother as she held him close. She let her hands travel all around his body. "Esko, my boy I will soon be gone because I found out today that I contracted a virus, the same virus that your father had, the Black Cell Virus.

"NO. No, it can't be." Esko shouted in distress. "You can't leave me, mom. I won't let you go."

"It's okay my son. I'd meet your father on the other side, it has been a while and I really miss him. I know he wouldn't want me over there at the moment, but this is something we can't change." A smile creased across her face as she remembered the beautiful times she shared with her husband. She wished she could stay a little while with her kids, but fate had something else in stock for her.

As Esko held on to her hands in tears he said in a whisper to Rosey, "What will I do? Who will care for me? Who will take care of Rose?"

"Well, Esko, you have already lived much of your life without me. Look at yourself, you are much more mature than you were when you first left home." Rosey said in pain with her eyes closed. "Esko! I can see the light of the afterlife and your father is there and is very proud of you. Esko, Esko my boy I can no longer open my eyes to see you. She held his hand and her last words were, I Love you, my son." After those words, her last breath left her.

"NOOOOOOOOOOO!" Esko shouted. Esko and Rose held each other tight and cried so much while Crystal looked on in tears. After they had mourned for a while, Crystal rang up an ambulance service. The ambulance arrived to take Rosey's lifeless body away. Esko stood at

the door with no hope and an unblinking gaze as the truck drove off in the distance. Rose held onto Crystal, she was broken. She finally fell asleep when she could cry no more.

Esko cried for various hours on the couch next to Crystal, and in a sudden moment - he heard his father whisper, "Never give up my son." Esko wiped the tears and said to himself: "I must get up. I must train My Mind, My Body and My Spirit to prepare for my return. I will not give up!" He arose with a renewed determination; he was going to fight back and reclaim all that was taken from him.

Chapter 16

Doubtful Situation

He sniffled and wiped the tears forming in his eyes from the thought of his mother. He had cried so much, and his head ached. The realization that he was an orphan now, with no one else in the world except his sister, Rose and Crystal dawned on him. At that moment he gazed into Crystal's eyes as she stood up and walked towards the window.

"Esko," she called and drew the curtains open. Sharp rays of sunlight immediately sliced through the darkness, lighting up the room, piercing his eyes and showing little specs of dust floating in the air. "Esko," She called out softly again. She advanced towards him and knelt beside the couch he lay on, "I've seen you at your strongest and today, I've seen you at your weakest, but now it's time to once again become stronger than you have ever been." "Bring back that strong man that means a lot to me". Esko looked at his hands and then up at Crystal, "Strong? Doubting himself, I'm not strong."

"Yes, you are." Crystal said confidently. "I'm not!" He screamed and immediately got up from the couch as he'd pounce on her. His actions

scared her. Crystal gasped and shifted away. "I'm not strong." He said softly and cast his gaze on the floor, "I couldn't even beat the cyborg."

Crystal got up on her feet, a faint smile on her face. "That's the thing: no one can beat the cyborg." "Should that make me feel any better?" Esko asked. Crystal shook her head impatiently, "Let me finish. No one has been able to beat the cyborg because he cheated." She then paused and rubbed her chin, "I think." "Cheated—what do you mean?" said Esko. Crystal mumbled slowly, "I don't know. I had this weird dream and I saw a strange man. He had a white beard and a shiny bald head. He said he was a..." "Trainer," she tried to remember. Esko interrupted and snapped his fingers, "Yes, the store clerk." "He should have some answers, and possibly a way to defeat Cyborg." Esko suddenly frowned, "But how do we find him? The store only shows up when it wants to."

Crystal sauntered around the room with her hand on her chin; she was thinking and trying to recall her dream. "He said something else, it's not clear." Esko looked up at her, "What did he say?" She remained quiet for a while, moving her lips slowly as if speaking quietly, then she looked up at Esko. "Dusty and old, I may be... look within and you'll find me." "What's that supposed to

mean?" Esko asked. Crystal just shrugged her shoulders. It was Esko's turn now to pace the room. Dusty and old, I may be...look within and you'll find me. What does it mean? He thought to himself. "It's like a riddle." Crystal said. "Yes," Esko agreed and began to look around the room. "If there's anything I know about riddles, it's that the obvious isn't always the answer." Crystal said and dropped down on the couch.

"Maybe," Esko suddenly said with a high-pitched voice. He was staring at something hidden in a dark corner of the room. He suddenly heard his mother's voice: "You will find what you are looking for here. The time has come for you to finish your father's mission." "The box!" Esko screamed and darted for that dark corner of the room. Crystal darted off the couch in shock, "What box?"

He reached his hand into the dark area. If only he had a torch, he thought. He felt around, his eyes closed to picture what he felt. Dust clung to his fingers and the floor felt rough, then his hand hit something hard and dusty. He smiled and grabbed onto it, before pulling it out. It was his father's dusty old trunk. Crystal stood over him and smiled. "Dusty and old. This could be it." "Yeah, fingers crossed." Esko heaved a sigh of relief and blew off the dust covering the trunk.

He then reached for the handle and pulled it open. "It's just my father's old junk. I've been through it before, never got the time to empty it completely and go through the contents patiently." Esko said, almost frustrated as they emptied every single content from the trunk.

Esko grunted and threw his hand into the air. He then kicked the trunk, expecting it to shift across the room since it was empty. It didn't move. Both Crystal and Esko exchanged looks and bent towards the box. "That felt heavy," Esko muttered and reached his hand into the trunk. Crystal looked on. "Look, there's something glowing in there." At the edge of the trunk, in a small compartment like a hole, there was a thin glow escaping from it. Esko touched the hole and realized that there was something like a paper covering it. He tore it off and behold, there was a little square device, like a mirror with a round red button in the middle. Esko took it.

Chapter 17

The Square Device

The square device was indeed like a mirror. Esko and Crystal could see their reflections clearly in it. No one said anything as they both tried to understand the strange device. They turned and scrutinized it. What was it? What was it doing in the trunk? Why was it glowing, and what does that button do?

"Push the button." Crystal finally said. Esko turned to her; he looked skeptical and his face didn't hide the fact that he was not sure of what might happen if he pushed the button. "What's the worst that could happen?" Crystal said. "Uh, we could die," Esko said, then paused. You're strong, he heard a voice within him.

He suddenly felt brave and stretched out a finger towards the button. He noticed that it felt as if there was a magnetic force pulling his finger faster to the button. He tried to resist it, but it pulled harder and immediately, his fingers touched the metal-like button. A gust of wind suddenly blew into the room and the curtains drawn shut by themselves. The room was in total darkness, except for a beam of red light coming from where the button was. They heard a beep.

And then another, and then a long rewinding sound as that familiar blue light poured out of the device and covered the darkroom. It was a projector of some sort.

An image suddenly appeared. It was an image Esko recognized from pictures his mother had given him; it was his father. The image looked down at them and after some silence - began to speak. "My son. I never got to meet you or watch you grow up, but I know you have grown up to be brave and strong. I spent many years in the Ancient World of Dixies, learned many skills, fought many foes, and made peace with the Dixies. I'm afraid the time has come when you must be of help. A dark foe, an enemy - unlike any the world has seen, is arising. Go now and finish your adventure!" "But father..." Esko started to say, but the image disappeared, and the blue light began to flicker. The curtains suddenly opened as before, and the room became bright again. Crystal turned to Esko with a puzzled look.

"Where do we need to go?!" Esko shouted and grabbed the device, he threw it to the wall, but it bounced back, unbroken. His question was unanswered. Crystal was about to say something but stopped abruptly when suddenly, a beeping sound was heard. The sound was high and fast

this time. Beeping like a digital alarm. It was coming from the device. Esko tossed the device onto the floor and held Crystal as they both shifted backward. The beeping continued and then suddenly stopped. Crystal sighed and looked at Esko. They were about to laugh when, all of a sudden, a bright light flashed over their faces and a dark veil engulfed them.

Chapter 18

The Cyborg

Esko was the first to wake up. His head was sore as if he'd banged his head on something hard. He wondered where he was as his face scrutinized his surroundings. He saw Crystal, unconscious, on a wooden bed, she seemed at peace. Slowly, he rose to his feet and ran to her. He shook her vigorously - fearing the worst. He wasn't prepared to lose her too after his mother's demise.

She shook slowly and mumbled incoherently as she slowly woke up. Relieved, Esko let go of her hand, helped her up while she sat up - still dazed. Esko looked around the room they were in. There was something strange about this place; something familiar; déjà vu, that was it.

Esko felt a burning in his chest and felt the sting from the Cyborg's blow. But then he also felt...stronger. Like the way, he'd felt with the Wadjet Eye. There was a fire pit dug into the ground, in the middle of the room. A purple flame rose off from the pit; this was what

illuminated the room. "What happened?" Crystal asked. She was wide awake now. She rubbed her forehead as if to relieve the ache in her head. Esko didn't answer, instead, he walked towards a large mirror set into the wall. The mirror looked just like the square device they'd seen, but bigger. "That's a transporter." A low voice, rough like that of an old man, spoke.

Crystal turned and looked around the room. Esko did so, too. There seemed to be no one there. "About time you came." The voice said again, this time floating in the air like the wind, around their ears. "Who's there?" "Why, it's only me." A whirlwind blew and circled in front of them. Then it stopped and revealed a man with grey hairs and glowing blue skin. Esko looked closer, "The store clerk?" The man smiled and nodded. "I saw you in my dream." Crystal said and stepped closer. The man nodded and said he'd tried Esko, but the boy was so ridden with grief to properly connect with him. "What happened to you?" Esko asked, "You look... different and Old?" The man chuckled and then suddenly fell silent. "Timing is different over here. For you see I have lived hundreds of years, Eskoflonie." "That was my father's name. I'm just Esko." The man shrugged as if it didn't matter. "Where is this place?" Crystal asked. "Huh?" The man turned to her. "You said timing is different

over here. Where exactly is 'here'?" "Oh," the man nodded as though he'd just recalled something, "Here is the ancient world of the Dixies."

His voice echoed and the roof above the room slowly began to open, like a pod or a flower blooming. The place was strange; the sky looked close, almost within touching distance and it was a faded grey. There were other pod-like huts scattered around. Hundreds, if not thousands of them. There were many illuminating creatures in the sky, like birds that flew about. "Dixies, those are." The man said in a weird tone. "They are like a natural resource here - very powerful." He then turned to Esko, "Your father knew all about them. "What's that?" Crystal pointed to a thin streak of black lightning that cut across the sky. "It has no name." The man said gravely, "The world is changing. The Dixies are getting weaker, which brings us back to you." He pointed a shaky finger at Esko. "Me?"

"Don't you wonder why you are here?" Esko stepped forward. "Yes?" The man then glanced from Crystal to Esko. "I believe you have heard of the chosen one?" They both nodded. The man coughed, "The stories are different, but all speak of a chosen one who will liberate the world from a terrible evil." Esko was about to speak, but the

man halted him by raising his hand. "Well, guess what: the chosen one is dead, and the terrible evil is coming." "Dead?" Crystal and Esko voiced out simultaneously. The man stared at them. "You are not the true chosen one. Your father was." He paused and looked Esko over, "But you'll have to finish what he started. The ancient evil seeks the widget eye; that one you...have." The man spoke the last part slowly as if posing a question. "I don't have it." Esko turned away, "I... Lost it, he dragged those words. It was taken from me." "Yes, of course. Cyborg. You'll need to get it back."

"Why? How?" Crystal asked. The man shot a terrible glance at her. "Didn't you hear that thing I said about the terrible, ancient evil? He plans to unite all worlds together; shatter the planes of existence and be the ultimate God. He's almost invincible. Almost, but there is one thing we must do." "Stop him from getting the Wadjet eye?" "Yes. But I fear we may already be too late." "That means I'll have to fight Cyborg again." "I don't think he'll hand over the Wadjet eye if I asked nicely." "I'm afraid not." Esko sighed and frowned, "But he beat me once." The man shrugged and said indifferently, "Then you must defeat him." "How?" "Cyborg never plays fair. Only your father knows the way to beat him." "But my father is dead," Esko said, almost with a

sob. "Yes, young Esko, but he lives there." He tapped the boy's chest, "deep within. Search within yourself. You have to call him out." Esko held on to his chest, feeling his unsteady heartbeat. In there? "But first, we must go back to the world where Cyborg dwells."

Chapter 19

Cyborg's World

Esko wondered to himself how exactly he was going to beat Cyborg. He had no powers, or belts, or the Wadjet eye. He thought about the man: did he have a name? If he knew my father and if he trained my father, then he can train me.

This idea made him instantly happy and he ran to find Crystal and the man. He found them standing outside a small boxlike airplane. "Here he comes." Crystal said. The man nodded and said he knew, that the Dixies told him. "This is going to be our way to Cyborg's World. It's going to be a rough ride, I'd advice you hold on tight" The man said and tapped the body of the aircraft. The machine hummed, shivered, sort of, like the rattling of scales or a million bugs...or dixies. Esko wondered but didn't ask. Instead, he looked at the man. "What is your name?" The man stopped what he was doing. Crystal also put down some ropes and faced him—she too, was curious.

His face suddenly became drawn and his eyes seemed to water. "I go by many names." He spoke up, "Well, at least a lot of people have many names for me: keeper, trainer, friend,

professor, and ghost." He turned to them, "I have lived many lives. But my true name is Zed." "Zed?" They both chorused. Zed nodded, and they looked alive and bright once more. He always seemed to be looking at Esko, sizing him up. "You have a question on your mind," Zed said—or asked. Esko wasn't really sure. "How did you..?" "Come here." He beckoned to the two young ones.

They crossed over the soft padding and reached Zed. He was squatting low, so they joined him "This world is connected, let's say like a circuit in your world." He placed his hand on the soil, purple it was and closed his eyes. Esko and Crystal observed. The soil around his hand began to circle and break off, forming a small hole. From the hole, a small purple light flickered and then went off. Zed removed his hand and it went back to normal. They were all silent for a while, then Esko spoke.

"What was that?" Zed sighed, "The Dixie energy. It grows weak." Crystal inched closer and looked over where the hole had formed. A thin crack was forming. "If it's connected like a circuit, then there must be like a—uh—battery, or power source, right?" "Correct!" Zed said as a gust of foul-smelling wind blew over their face. He turned North, towards a distant mountain, and

said: "Over there lies the Ancient Dixie heart. It's dying. The evil I spoke of is slowly corrupting it." He turned now to Esko, "That shall be the last part of your adventure after you defeat this evil. It is destiny." "But how?" Esko gasped, "You have to train me, Zed." The wind blew again, and a thin streak of purple lightning struck the clouds and exploded. Zed saw it; they all did. "There is no time now. Into the aircraft, hurry!" They all scrambled on; the machine creaked as they all got it.

Zed tapped the body and the doors closed. "You arrived there through a Book of Ra, remember?" They nodded. "This time we shall go in through the Plane of Matter." Zed watched them and saw their curiosity increase. "It is the natural divide that separates the many worlds, including yours, from one another. It is what this evil seeks to destroy. He seeks to force an unnatural unification, which will decimate the whole worlds, leaving a dark ruin where only he can live in." Zed closed a book in his hand and looked up at them. The book had the word 'PROPHECY' carved on it.

Both Esko and Crystal wondered where the book had come from. The Plane of Matter was a huge waterfall-like wall that encircled the boundary of the world of Dixies. It seemed to

flow upwards, as if by some strange magic, and it seemed to change pattern. It flickered on and off; visible and invisible, every few moments. "Why does it do that?" Crystal asked as they approached it.

"It's supposed to be invisible, but since the world is weakening, the plane is also weakening." Esko felt heavy as they approached the plane. He felt heavy and sad, and maybe - scared. Okay, he was more scared than sad. When he'd had the Wadjet Eye he'd felt so brave. He remembered the ninjas and how he'd trashed them. He even tried to replay the moves in his head, but he got nothing. Cyborg had ripped something out of him; something he needed to get back. The thought of Cyborg oddly made Esko feel terribly angry, and vicious. He didn't seem afraid for those few seconds. He closed his eyes and whispered to himself, holding his chest: father, if you hear me, I need you now.

Zed had been watching the boy all the while. He smiled faintly and then frowned. He'd have to do, he thought to himself; he'll just have to do. The machine whirled and whooshed through the plane, disappearing just as the barrier changed. White Dragon Island looked different from how he'd last seen it. "What happened here?" Esko asked and looked down through the window of

the machine as they flew over the charred land. The floor below was burnt; a charred charcoal-dark and radiant red. The houses around, even though empty, were all broken down and smoked up. "The evil has awakened," Zed said as they moved on.

He pointed at a huge floating castle in the distance. "Cyborg is over..." He didn't get to finish his sentence when, all of a sudden, there was a large boom and the machine shook violently. It felt as if someone had hurled a gigantic stone at them. The inside of the machine, where they all stood, lit up bright red and some alarms began to blare. "We've lost control!" Zed shouted as he tried to feel for signs on the machine. He got nothing. The machine whirled and sailed straight down, with a trail of dark smoke, towards the ground. "Brace your..." The machine hit the ground with a loud crash and everywhere fell silent.

Esko heard voices—muffled voices, all around him. It sounded like people arguing and shouting, or some sort of commotion. He opened his eyes slowly and what he saw made him gasp. He opened his mouth to scream, but Zed's hand quickly fell over it. He pointed a finger over his lip as a signal for him to be quiet. Zed then pulled him over to where Crystal lay, behind

the crashed machine. Esko looked at the small cut on Crystal's arm. She followed his gaze and then looked at him: "I'm fine." She whispered. They all turned their attention back to the arguments on the other side. Esko looked through a small hole and watched closely: he could see ninjas. But ninjas unlike the ones he'd seen before; they wore ninja clothes, but that was the only thing human about them. Their eyes glowed and they growled like animals. Their skin was black and burnt, and their outfits slashed and torn in different parts. "Demon ninjas," Zed said and they shifted deeper into the crashed machine.

The inside was a bit hot from the smoke that filled the cabin. The seats were broken and so was most of the compartments. But Zed didn't care, he was searching for something. After a while, he found it, deep within a stone box, concealed inside the walls of the machine. It looked old. It was a memory keeper. A different type, one that fits into a glove. "Here, put this on," Zed said and handed Esko the glove. Esko seemed apprehensive and wasn't so sure. "I trained your father," Zed said, and listened as footsteps got closer to them, "You have to trust me. Put this on and go out there." Esko nodded and slipped his right hand into the glove. Four thin rays of purple light beeped out of the glove

and scanned his arm. "Upgrade ready." A voice said and Esko felt a sharp pinch in his arm as a threadlike tissue began to wrap around him. In a little while, he was dressed like a ninja, but different.

His shirt was white with a golden chest plate built across it. His belt, golden, flapped in the wind and his pants compressed over his legs and it all made him stronger. Esko felt a surge of energy go through him. He felt stronger than he had ever been. "Woah!" He gasped and looked at the tiny screen on the glove - now fused to his hand. It showed a golden bar, the exact length of the screen. It glowed. "Now, go!" Zed shouted just as the growls and footsteps reached them.

Esko knelt them and the ground around him began to crack. He screamed and leaped high into the air, going up even to the clouds. From up there he could see the demon ninjas, five of them. He controlled his jump and landed right in their midst. The demon ninjas growled, saliva forming around their sharpened teeth. They ran and surrounded Esko. He jumped up and threw a spinning kick, which caught three of the demon ninjas and sent them flying into the air. He reached for another and performed a flying Demolish Blow, the demon ninja screeched and turned to dark ash. Esko laughed, this was fun.

Remembering a move he'd seen on TV, he reached for the last one and hooked his hand around the waist, he tapped his leg on the ground and leaned backward, performing a reverse piledriver. The demon also shriveled into dark ash and disappeared. "Wooh! That was easy." Esko laughed and ran towards the others. Crystal clapped and also laughed with him. Zed, on the other hand, scratched his chin and mumbled to himself: "Maybe too easy." "Let's go find Cyborg. He'll be no match for me now, with this glove." "Easy now, young Esko. True strength doesn't come from trinkets like the Wadjet Eye or gloves like this one. It comes from within." "Yeah, but did you see me just now?" Esko laughed, "Cyborg is no match for me." (Seems like a part is missing of Cyborg and Esko interaction. Please add)

He was right, Cyborg was no match for him. In fact, Cyborg was no match for anybody now for he was dying. He lay in a pool of dark blood, gasping and coughing. There was a huge hole in his chest (where he'd fused the Wadjet Eye to his body). "What happened?" Crystal and Esko asked. Zed looked away, "A stronger foe got to him before us. Now he's got the only thing he needed to end the world." Cyborg coughed and began a slow chuckle. Blood spilled from his mouth, and his teeth were all dark and oily.

"Hehe, I'll be damned!" He coughed again, "The Wizard is back, and this time knows no old friends. I offered to serve, but he did this... to me." He coughed loudly, and blood gurgled out of his mouth, and his chest. "He has heard of you, young fighter. You're next." With that, he breathed deeply and fell sideways, dead.

Immediately, the sky became dark and a thundering laughter, heavy enough to shake the sky, ripped through the clouds. The ground began to shake like a massive earthquake. The plane of matter (in this world, in the form of a dark forest) began to burn off. "It has begun," Zed said almost calmly. The ground began to quake, and a long crack appeared, slowly splitting it. The terrible trembling voice erupted again and then, suddenly, a fireball shot out of the crack and passed between the three. The force was so much that it pushed Esko across the ground to one side, while Crystal and Zed were tossed to the other side.

The ground between them tore further apart, separating them. Esko got up from the ground, tightened his fist around the glove and looked around for the owner of the voice. He ran towards the edge of the hole, hoping to jump across, but something picked him off the ground. Esko found himself upside down as he kept going

higher into the clouds. He could hear a loud flapping noise and he felt the grip of something tight and sharp around his foot. He swung his hand in the air and looked up. That was when he saw it: The White Dragon.

Chapter 20

The White Dragon

No one has ever seen The White Dragon. Not physically, at least. Stories have been told, legends crafted, but no one had really cast their eyes on it. Yet, here it was with Esko in its grasp, flying off and cutting into the dark clouds. Esko shifted himself and aimed his fist at the dragon's feet. The glove beeped as it got supercharged and with one heavy strike, he shot a blow at the dragon. It screeched loud and let go of him. The fall was long and fast. Esko tried to steady himself as he fell through the clouds, the wind was sharp against his face.

He could see the ground approaching quickly and he used his hand to cover his face, expecting a hard fall. He felt nothing, instead, he heard the beep of a glove and noticed that it had created a force field that shielded him from the fall. Esko stood up, angry now, and ready to fight. He just did not notice the few sparks that came out from his glove. "Come out so I can fight you!" Esko screamed. A large wind blew across him and he looked up to see what it was. The clouds began to part way and The White Dragon came closer. The white dragon was said to have been the sacred protector of the Island, but this looked

like no protector. Its eyes glowed red and its mouth was covered with rings of dark flame.

The white of his body was covered in an encroaching dark vein, like a sickness. It was the Wizard's doing. Esko saw him for the first time, standing on The White Dragon. The Wizard was fearsome; he had no face, just darkness inside the hood of his black cloak.

His hands were rounded with fire and a short burst of flames came out of the darkness of his faceless face. "The... Chosen... One." The wizard said slowly and vanished. Esko was shocked and turned around to find out where the wizard had gone. "Behind you." He heard a whoosh and immediately turned around. The wizard struck him, but Esko was fast. He did a side flip and got into his stance - ready to battle. The wizard laughed slowly and brought out something from his cloak: it was the Wadjet Eye. He held on to it tight and then stretched one hand at Esko.

Immediately a set of demon ninjas flipped out from nowhere and attacked him. Esko fought them with ease at first, but then he noticed they were getting stronger. He punched the last one in the chest and ripped out a beating heart that shriveled off into ash and spread into the air. Esko then turned to the wizard and charged at it. He leaped into the air and his glove activated a

'force punch', like a fireball, which spiraled towards the wizard. The wizard dodged it and laughed. He ran towards Esko and they began fighting. "Not as weak as I thought...you would be." The wizard said and grabbed Esko's arm, "But not as strong either." He twisted the arm till there was a loud crack, Esko shouted as he felt the gloved force out of his hand. It felt like being imprinted with a red-hot iron.

The wizard then drew him closer and smashed him into the ground. Zed turned away, Crystal wept. Esko opened his eyes to see a bright light. They were there, his parents; he could see them. With a leap of joy, he tried to reach for them, but they shifted backward. "You're strong, Esko. Go now, and finish this, for we are with you...in there." They touched his chest with white light and he suddenly gasped loudly.

Esko felt a familiar heat course through his system. His eyes glowed white and then his whole body engulfed in a radiating aura of electricity. "It... cannot be." The wizard said and tried to attack him. Esko moved swiftly, evading every hit by the wizard. He then lowered himself and delivered the thousand-death punch, striking at the speed of light, into the chest of the wizard. The Wadjet Eye fell from the wizard's

grasp and his body began to glow a bright red and then - as he screamed, his body exploded.

EPILOGUE

The story was forever told of a young boy named Esko. The Chosen One, the Messiah of the Nexus and Savior of the whole universe. His story was passed down by parents to offspring by word of mouth. He was given the title, 'our hero'. His footprints were forever engraved in the sands of time. He was described as the one who defeated the evil Wizard singlehandedly with a strange force only a few could understand. He possessed the powers of a thousand men. The Dixies believed his father reincarnated in him and came back to complete his quest and rid the universe of the evil that lurked behind the shadows. Esko possessed his father's powers and with that, was able to save the Dixies and the universe.

The people of White Dragon island were forever indebted to Esko. The ruins in the city - resulting from the battle were mended. The people of White dragon island collectively worked extremely hard together in restoring the town to its former glory. Young and old united themselves and worked together to dredge the debris that laid unperturbed after the great cleansing on the island.

A monumental figure of Esko was erected in the center of the town. He felt proud of himself and wished his parents were still alive to witness the man he had become. The plane of matter returned to normal and, one by one, the ninjas disappeared from the island. Most of them surrendered while Esko battled the ones who still stayed back and wouldn't accept defeat. He banished them from the island never to return.

The white dragon was back, the black evil vein eliminated from it. The dragon returned as the protector of the island – as it was. It rightfully assumed its place and peace returned to the island. People moved freely without fear of being attacked by ninjas or the evil wizard, for the evil wizard had been defeated, his reign put to an end together with the ninjas he had recruited.

The ancient world of Dixies was greatly indebted to Esko. Just like his father, he had fought to protect the Dixies and their powers. When they thought he would have fled and left them to fate, he stood by them putting aside the fact that his life was on the line. The Nexus was restored and the evil that had spread disappeared. They hovered over him whispering their thanks to him. The Dixies were more beautiful than he had imagined. They were within grasp. They offered

him the powers and abilities that men sought but couldn't possess. Together, the Dixies helped him restore his arms that had been snapped by the wizard during the battle. The Helan Dixies - Dixies that possessed healing powers were happy to do this. They hovered in circles over his arm restoring it to its initial state. Esko smiled at them, his heart almost exploding from gratitude.

The ancient world of the Dixies still pulses to this day - beating as one, and forever holding to the memory of the adventures of Esko.

Esko was most grateful to those who had contributed to making his adventure a success - especially, Jack and Zed.

Zed returned to his home-world. His job was done, for the adventure was over. Esko had proven himself worthy, just like his father had. He swelled with pride looking back at what they had been through and were able to accomplish.

"Phew, I'll miss you, young man! but I want you to know that I'd always be here whenever you need me," Zed said. He retrieved something from his pocket, covered it with his hands and asked Esko to stretch forth his palms. Esko did as he was instructed, and he handed the object to Esko. It was the Wadjet eye and it glowed when

he touched it just like it did the very first time, he held it.

"This is yours, you earned it," he said softly to Esko.

Esko opened his mouth, but he couldn't utter a word. He hugged Zed as he bade him farewell.

"Thank you for restoring peace to the universe."

"I couldn't have done it without you," Esko replied.

The store clerk still looked agile, his white beards accentuating his white robe. His bald head shone in the sun like a polished surface. Crystal still wondered the reason why he walked around barefoot.

"I will miss you, Zed," Crystal interrupted them as teardrops escaped Esko's eyes.

"Come here you," Zed beckoned on Crystal. She embraced him and held him tightly.

"Young lady, you're hurting an old man with fragile bones. I'm not as strong as you think I am," he smiled at her.

"I'm sorry, Zed. We're grateful to you for being there. If not for you, we would be long dead," she whispered.

"Thank you for being there every step of the way, for holding onto Esko and encouraging him, you're a strong woman."

Zed kissed her on her cheeks. He bade them farewell and started to walk away. In the distance, Esko saw the old wooden store, he smiled when the sound of the wind whooshed past them, raising dust particles along the path Zed strode. When they looked in his direction, they discovered he had disappeared with the wind like he always did.

"My boy," Jack beamed with smiles. He lifted Esko off the ground, carried him around like a trophy chanting his name. Crystal laughed with them as Jack went around in circles. He dropped Esko on the ground and hugged him. They broke the hug, but Jack went ahead to ruffle Esko's hair.

"I always knew you could do it, you have it in you."

"I couldn't have done it alone if you weren't there every step of the way."

Jack smiled at him, "Thank you."

Crystal cleared her throat, "You guys forget I was there all the way too."

She feigned annoyance, pursing her lips.

"Here's my favorite girl." Jack held her in his arms, mouthed a thank you to her and hugged her.

"How is your brother?" Esko asked.

"He's probably fine wherever he is," he replied unconcerned.

"I'm sorry he turned out the way he did," Crystal chipped in.

"He plied the path that suited him the most. How have you guys been coping with all the 'thank you' chants?"

He thought it best if they discussed other things rather than talk about his disappointment with a brother.

"I could feed on the pride for eternity," Crystal cried out. Esko pinched her arms and they all laughed.

Jack invited them to come over to his place and stay for a while before embarking on their journey back home just like old times. It was an invitation they couldn't turn down as they chattered loudly on their way home. Jack walked ahead of them and let the lovebirds follow behind.

"Rose, where are you? I'm home baby, I'm home," Esko shouted when they got home. He raced to the door, turned the knob and let himself in. It had been aged he saw his twin sister, they had barely spent time together before he started his quest. Just like Crystal, she was a strong woman, she had kept her cool even after their mother's demise. Sadness flowed through his veins with the realization. He was going to be there with and for her this time - he thought to himself.

Rose couldn't contain her joy when her brother walked through the door. She screamed his name as she ran into his outstretched arms and threw herself on him. He was alright and so was Crystal. She held onto him tightly and made him promise to never leave her all by herself anymore.

"I'm going nowhere again, it's you and I until you decide you want to leave, baby". He stroked her back as she sobbed on his shoulders. The first tear dropped off his eye and after that, the rest followed in an unbroken stream.

"I missed you, Esko, I really did"

"I did too, sis".

Rose had felt lonely since Esko's departure and the demise of their mother. Staying home all by

herself with no one to talk to. She was glad her brother was home to stay.

Crystal watched them and dropped a tear from the affection they displayed. She wished she belonged to a family that would treat her just the way Esko and Rose loved each other. But, at the moment, she belonged to one, Esko and Rose, they were all she had.

She smiled at Rose when she looked up from her brother's embrace.

"You too Crystal, I don't want to lose you," she spoke softly as she embraced her. Crystal held onto her for a long time unwilling to break the embrace.

"That's its ladies," Esko motioned to them to break off the embrace. They all laughed.

"You don't have to be jealous, bro. Come join us if it hurts," Rose mocked with her tongues out.

Esko broke the embrace, stood between them and put his arms around them as they struggled to get back together.

With the days that followed, Crystal became a skilled fighter, second only to the one who taught her: Esko. She mastered the use of the sword and came up with her very own signature attacks. Esko loved it whenever she

demonstrated her moves and would laugh at her when she messed up. He taught her a lot more on how to bring an enemy to his knees. He was proud of the woman she had become. He was proud of himself for being a good teacher.

"You're not just beautiful, you're a strong woman, stronger than any I know of," Esko smiled at Crystal and leaned in for a kiss.

He was happy that Crystal was there, by his side, he wouldn't have been able to restore peace to the universe if it wasn't for her. Her resilience had kept him going.

.....

"Dearest Crystal, will you take me as your friend and most importantly, your husband till the world comes crashing?" He knelt beside her weeks later, her hands in his and beaming with smiles like his mouth had been stretched out as the muscles could not return to their relaxed state.

"Uhm, I'm not sure if I should say yes, I'm not in love with you," she said with a straight face.

Esko's eyeballs bulged in disbelief, his heart rent in two and his countenance turned sour. He

couldn't believe she didn't feel the way he did. He felt like his heart had been ripped from his body as he stared hard at her.

"Wh...what?"

Crystal broke into a peal of hysterical laughter, "You should see the look on your face", she mocked. She made faces trying to imitate him.

Esko pulled her close and tickled her, "I could kill you right now."

"Yes, yes, I'll marry you, Esko. I want to go on more adventures with you, fighting beside you and knocking the bad guys out," she smiled up at him.

"I love you. Thanks for sticking by me."

"I'm glad you didn't refuse me from going with you. Still wouldn't have worked anyway."

Esko lifted her off the ground from her shoulders and twirled her around. She giggled as he kissed her some more.

"We're getting married!" She beamed as Rose approached them.

Rose embraced them and screamed happily.

"Yeah, I'm going to be an aunt, soon." Esko and Crystal stared at each other in bewilderment.

"Is that all you could come up with?" Esko asked her.

They all laughed.

"Yes, that's the only thing I hear when people say they're getting married."

"You're still living in the dark ages, the only place that suits you perfectly," Esko told her with a smirk.

"I am a twin, if the dark ages are my best place of abode, so is it for my other half," she retorted.

Four months later, Esko and Crystal walked down the aisle hand in hand as all their friends looked on and cheered them. It was a rainy day with tears dripping off every pair of eyes as they all reunited with themselves. Tears fell, but it was not the bad sort.

-- THE END --



White Dragon Island





14/03/2002

John Morgan









